

" Heads, similar to the others, Two Battle Axes, and a Shaft or Pole, with
 " a Screw on the End, fitted for receiving either the Spear Head or Battle
 " Axe.

" Immediate Enquiry being made after the Persons with whom this
 " Individual had last been seen in Company, and Two Blacksmiths being
 " mentioned among them, their Houses and Shops were immediately
 " searched; One of the Two was also taken into Custody; the other
 " escaped and absconded.—In the Shop of the First of these Men were
 " found Four Pike or Spear Heads, finished, fitted with Screws and
 " Sockets, and ready to be fixed on Shafts; Eight Battle Axes, also fitted
 " and finished; and twenty Blades more not quite finished, but nearly
 " so.

" In the Shop and Dwelling House of the other, who had absconded,
 " no such Weapons were found; but the Apprentices, on being examined
 " before a Magistrate, acknowledged that the Pike or Spear Heads first
 " discovered had been privately manufactured in their Master's Shop
 " during the Course of this Fortnight past, and earned privately in his
 " House as soon as completed.

" The Battle Axes and Blades appear also to have been manufactured
 " within this Fortnight past; and were intended, as the Maker of them
 " said, for the Purpose of arming the People, should an Invasion take
 " Place. But it appears, that to his Apprentices, whom he had employed
 " in assisting him to make them, he pretended they were meant for a Game;
 " an Account obviously false, as he could not point out any Game for which
 " these Weapons were intended, nor name any Person who had ordered
 " him to frame a Game of so particular a Construction.

" These Circumstances have induced the Magistrates to commit all the
 " Persons concerned, for Examination; and the Result of the Enquiries
 " which are at present carrying forward, I expect will be regularly com-
 " municated to me.—It is proper also to inform you, that all the Persons
 " chiefly concerned appear to have been Members of the British Conven-
 " tion which met at Edinburgh last Winter; and since the Dispersal of it
 " have continued the most active and leading Persons in the Societies
 " whose Delegates composed the principal Part of that Meeting, who ap-
 " pear at present taking Measures for calling another Convention of the
 " same Nature, which they expected is to take place soon in England;
 " and some of whom have acknowledged that the Propriety of the Indi-
 " viduals composing these Societies arming themselves with Spears and
 " Pikes has, within these few Weeks past, been the Subject of Conversation
 " amongst them, and Steps taken for carrying that Purpose into Execution
 " with Caution and Secrecy.

" The Silence of One of the Persons, the inconsistent and contradictory
 " Account of the other, and the Flight of the Third, throw a very strong
 " Suspicion on the Purposes and Intentions of the Parties concerned in

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" this

" this Transaction. The Sheriff is, in the Course of his Duty, procuring
 " an investigation the Matter more accurately : But I consider it necessary
 " and proper to communicate through you to the Committee Information
 " so incidentally connected with the Object of its Enquiries, however imper-
 " fect that Information still is, but which I have no Doubt will soon be
 " completed.

" I am,

" S I R,

" Your most obedient

" Humble Servant,

" Right Honble. Mr. Pitt."

" HENRY DUNDAS."

" Whitehall, 13d May 1794-

" S I R,

" I have received this Morning farther Accounts from the Sheriff De-
 " putee of Edinburgh, of the Transactions stated in my last Letter ; and the
 " Result of the Enquiries since made by that Magistrate, and which are
 " still going forward, appear to me of such a Nature as to deserve the
 " particular Attention of the Secret Committee.

" One of the Individuals mentioned in my former Letter has since
 " made a Disclosure, and a Person since taken into Custody, and who ap-
 " pears to have been privy to the whole Transaction, has confessed, that
 " these Weapons were the First of a very large Number and Quantity,
 " actually ordered to be made, and intended to be privately dispersed
 " among the Members of the various Societies throughout Scotland,
 " styling themselves Friends of the People, and who appear to be at pre-
 " sent employed in taking Measures for calling together another British
 " Convention of Delegates to be held in England. An Order has been
 " given from one Town alone in Scotland, for a large Quantity of Wea-
 " pons of the Nature described ; no less a Number than 4,000 has been
 " mentioned, and more are intended to be distributed in Edinburgh.
 " Emisaries appear also to have been dispatched, within this Fortnight or
 " Three Weeks past, to the Manufacturing Towns in the West of Scot-
 " land, for the Purpose of fomenting the Inclinations of such of the Inha-
 " bitants there who are known to be Members of these Societies ; and
 " there is Reason to believe, from Information received from various dis-
 " ferent Quarters, that these Persons have by no Means been un suc-
 " cessful.

" Paisley is in particular alluded to as being in a State of great Readiness ; and there has been positive Information received through other
 " Channels, that within these Three Weeks Persons of that Description
 " have assembled themselves to a very considerable Number in the Night
 " Time, for the Purpose of practising the Use of Arms. The Particulars
 " of this Information, and the Extent to which these Meetings have pro-
 " ceeded,

" needed, are at present Master of Enquiry with the proper Magistrates
 " of the Place; but the Result has not yet been received.

" The Formation of this Plan is now traced Home to certain Persons,
 " some of whom are in Custody, who appear to be entrusted by these So-
 " cieties in Scotland with the most unlimited Powers in directing their
 " future Proceedings—carrying on their Correspondence—and who act as
 " a Committee of Secrecy, consisting of a certain Number of Persons,
 " the principal and most active Members of the British Convention.
 " The choosing of Delegates to the expected Convention in England, the
 " Place of whole Meeting is not yet divulged, and the raising of Contribu-
 " tions among the various Societies throughout Scotland for defraying the
 " Charges of such Delegates, appear to be the material Part of their present
 " Employment, and in which it would seem they have made some Pro-
 " gress. And it is the same Committee who have, for these some Weeks
 " past, been confining and taking Measures for arming themselves and
 " the Members of the various Clubs with Pikes and Battle Axes, and
 " who have employed the Persons above mentioned in manufacturing
 " them. The Scheme appears to have been first proposed and agreed
 " upon about a Month ago; so have been since carried on with the utmost
 " Secrecy and Caution; and the Weapons, so far as has yet been disco-
 " vered, manufactured by such Persons, in such small Quantities, in such
 " Circumstances, and under such Pretences, as not to render the Progress
 " of the Work probably liable to Suspicion or Detection; and it was
 " brought to Light by the very accidental and singular Incident which I
 " mentioned in my former Letter.

" I have the Satisfaction of observing, that the Magistrates and Officers
 " of the Law in Scotland have been, and still continue, active in the
 " Searches and Enquiries making at the different suspected Places within
 " their respective Jurisdictions.—In Perth and Dundee nothing has been
 " discovered which can lead me to believe that Measures have been taken
 " in either of these Places for making Arms, the Manufacture of which
 " seems to have been confined to Edinburgh, and intended to have been
 " gradually dispersed from thence to such Places as required them.—No
 " such Weapons have been discovered at Paisley or in its Neighbourhood;
 " though the Intention of arming, and holding regular Nightly Meetings,
 " are perfectly ascertained.

" Information has also been communicated, of the Authenticity of
 " which there is no Room to doubt, that a Conspiracy has been formed, as
 " soon as a proper Number of these Weapons were distributed among the
 " Friends of the People in Edinburgh, to rise in the Night the Persons
 " of the principal Magistrates, and Officers of the Law; the Banks, the
 " Public Offices, Guards, and Prison; and after inciting the Soldiery from
 " the Castle, by kindling a Fire in the Middle of the City, to intercept
 " them on their Return, by Means of different armed Parties to be proper-
 " ly stationed for that Purpose.

" It appears likewise, from indisputable Facts, that the most secret and
 " artful Means have been and are still using with the Feacible Regiments
 " in

Appendix A (No. 1.)

" in Scotland to excite them to Disobedience and Mutiny.—The printed
 " Paper which I herewith transmit has been industriously circulated for
 " that Purpose.

" I have the Honour to be,

" S I R,

" Your most obedient

" Humble Servant,

" Right Honble. Mr. Pitt."

" HENRY DUNDAS."

" Whitehall, 24th May 1794.

" S I R,

" I have received no further Accounts of the Result of the Enquiries
 " going on in Edinburgh; but I am sorry to find that I have received Infor-
 " mation from the Sheriff of the County of Renfrew, confirmed by Letters
 " received from other respectable Persons in Paisley, that the Magistrates
 " of that Place having, in the Course of their Enquiries, committed on
 " the Afternoon of the 19th a Man to Custody for further Examination,
 " a considerable Number of Persons (several Hundreds) assembled in
 " the Evening, and after choosing a President, whom they addressed by
 " the Title of Chosen President, voted a Number of Resolutions to the
 " following Purpose—That a National Convention should be immediately
 " called, to which they would send Delegates—That they should not
 " petition Parliament, as it was to themselves alone, and to such Conven-
 " tion, they could look for Redress. They then proceeded to consider
 " the Conduct of the Sheriff and Magistrates in committing their Bro-
 " ther Citizen, as he was termed; and, after much Discussion as to the
 " Propriety of immediately releasing him by Force, the Majority seemed
 " inclined to take mild Measures first, and to send a Deputation to ask
 " his Release. But the Magistrates having received Information of
 " what was intended, and detained the Man from Custody, the Mob
 " dispersed with Threats, having been previously instructed by their
 " President to abstain from further Tumult, and to observe a peaceable
 " and orderly Conduct.

" The Authority of the Civil Magistrate is in the mean Time entirely
 " superseded; and until a proper Force is sent to protect them in the
 " future Execution of their Duty, which has been anxiously required by
 " the Sheriff and Magistrates, they dare not proceed in the common
 " Course of legal and judicial Enquiry against any of the Persons who
 " are suspected of being concerned in these violent and tumultuary Pro-
 " ceedings. But it cannot escape the Observation of the Committee,
 " how accurately this Intelligence corresponds with and confirms the
 " Information Yesterday communicated, as to the State of the Minds of
 " these People in that Neighbourhood; the Alarm which their Leaders
 " feel as to the Result of the legal Enquiries at present depending; and the
 " regular

" regular systematic Connection between them and the Leaders at Edinburgh, as discovered from the yet unfinished and hasty Examinations taken in that City.

" I have the Honour to be,

" S I R,

" Your most obedient humble Servant,

" HENRY DUNDAS."

" Right Honble. Mr. Pitt."

" Whitehall, 27th May, 1794.

" S I R,

" I have this Morning received farther Information from Scotland, which appears to me proper to be communicated to the Committee.

" The Persons in whose Custody the Weapons, formerly described, were found, appear to have acted for some Time past under the Name of a Committee of Ways and Means appointed by the British Convention, and so have been empowered by the various Societies throughout Scotland to direct all their future Proceedings.—By means of emissaries privately dispatched to different Parts of the Country, this Committee has signified to, and prepared a Number of the Societies for the approaching Convention in England, many of whom have chosen, and all, as far as is yet known, agreed to choose Delegates to attend it, and subscribe for their Expences.—The Time and Place of meeting was not divulged, and were to be communicated from Edinburgh in proper Time, by Individuals to be sent from thence for that Purpose, whose Arrival was Daily looked for by several of the different Societies.—One of the Members of the last Convention at Edinburgh appears within this Fortnight past to have been dispatched, and so have actually performed an extensive Tour through the West Part of Scotland, to have visited in his Progress the Towns of Queensberry, Falkirk, Stirling, St. Ninians, Kilsyth, Kirkintilloch, Cumnock, Glasgow, and Paisley; in all of which Places he appears to have met with the principal Persons concerned in these Societies, to have left with them, and the Members of the Societies, Copies of a Circular Letter from the Committee of Edinburgh, and instructed them in what Manner they were in future to carry on their Correspondence; and so have suggested to them the Propriety of furnishing themselves with Arms, for the Purpose of Defence, under the Pretence of defending themselves against Foreign Troops.—An Attempt has been made to distribute some of the Weapons lately discovered at Edinburgh, by Means of Persons privately dispatched to the Country for that Purpose; and which seems only to have failed in its Execution from the Timidity of the Person solicited to do so.

Vide Appendix A.
(No 2.)

" An Individual of the same Description has been taken into Custody in the Country, who appears to have commissioned, and actually re-

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" coived from England, some Muskets and Bayonets. On being ques-
 " tioned by the proper Magistrate, he has refused giving any Explana-
 " tion, further than that he commissioned them in the Way of his Busi-
 " ness—But it does not appear that he ever dealt in such Articles before;
 " no Person appears to have commissioned him to procure any such; and
 " there seems to be full Evidence of his having solicited others to per-
 " chase what they of themselves were not thinking of, or wishing to
 " provide.

" He admits having corresponded with the London Corresponding
 " Society on the Subject of a Convention, and that the Society of
 " which he is a Leader had agreed to send Delegates to it, as soon as
 " the Time and Place of meeting should be divulged.

" A Requisition has been made by the Magistrates and principal In-
 " habitants of Paisley, for a Military Force to protect them in the Exe-
 " cution of their Duty, and in their Persons and Properties; which has
 " been duly attended to.—It is with much Satisfaction I inform you, that
 " the Gentlemen of Estate and Character, in the County of Renfrew,
 " have voluntarily stepped forward, and determined to support the Au-
 " thority of the Civil Magistrate.

" I have the Honour to be

" S I R,

" Your most Obedient

" Humble Servant,

" HENRY DUNDA S^r."

" Right Honble. Mr. Pitt."

" Whitehall, 2d June, 1794.

" S I R,

" The Information I have received this Morning from Edinburgh ena-
 " bles me to state to the Committee that the Transactions communicated
 " in my former Letters are farther cleared up by the Enquiries which have
 " since taken place in that City.

" Some of the Persons who absconded on the first Discovery of the
 " Arms concealed in certain Houses have been discovered and appre-
 " hended; and the Result of these farther Enquiries confirms, in almost
 " every Particular, the Account received from other Quarters, and the
 " Import of which I have already laid before the Committee.—The
 " Establishment of a Secret Committee at Edinburgh, invested with full
 " Powers to direct the future Operations of the Societies throughout
 " Scotland; the regular Correspondence privately carried on by Means of
 " Emissaries dispatched to the different Towns; the ascertaining the exact
 " Number of Persons in these Societies, who were directed to provide
 " themselves with Arms, and to hold themselves in Readiness for any
 " Measure which the Secret Committee might in due Time commu-
 " nicate; are confirmed by every Account and Information which the

" Magistrates

" Magistrates have received. And an Individual who has been lately
 " taken into Custody has confirmed the Account received from a
 " different Quarter, of the dangerous Design planned by the Edinburgh
 " Committee, of effecting a general Insurrection as soon as they were
 " ready and prepared for carrying it into Execution, by the Seizure of the
 " principal Magistrates and Officers of the Law at Midnight, and posses-
 " sing themselves of the Prisons and Public Offices, as stated to you in my
 " Letter of the 23d May, and then communicated through a different
 " Channel from that through which the present Confirmation of these
 " Circumstances has been received. The Plan seems not only to have
 " been discussed and deliberated on by the Ringleaders at Edinburgh,
 " but to have proceeded a certain Degree in its Steps towards actual
 " Execution, which appear to have been conducted with the utmost
 " Caution; and there is Reason to believe, that the Execution of the Plan
 " was not to be confined to Edinburgh, but was meant to take place in
 " some of the most considerable Towns in Scotland on a certain Day, and
 " at one and the same Time. The proper and usual Steps have been
 " taken for bringing the Offenders to Trial; and those against whom the
 " Information chiefly points are detained in Custody.

" I have the Honour to be,

" S I R,

" Your most obedient humble Servant,

" HENRY DUNDAS."

" Right Honble. Mr. Pitt."

From what has been stated it appears, that the Design of arming, as far as it has yet proceeded, has been conducted with great Secrecy and Caution, and at the same Time with a remarkable Degree of Uniformity and Concert in Parts of the Kingdom remote from each other. The Weapons principally provided seem to have been peculiarly calculated for the Purposes of sudden Violence, and to have been chosen in Conformity to the Example of what has recently passed in France. The actual Progress made in the Execution of the Design, during the short Period of a few Weeks, sufficiently shows what might have been expected, if the Societies had proceeded, without Interruption, in increasing the Number of their Members, and the Fund for providing Arms.

YOUR COMMITTEE will next proceed to lay before the House an Account of various remarkable Circumstances, which have appeared in the Course of this Investigation, and which furnish striking Instances, either of the general Principles on which the chief Promoters of this Plan have acted, or of specific Measures which they had in Contemplation, and which, from their Nature and Importance, deserve to be particularly noticed.

The general Disposition of the Persons engaged in these Measures, to applaud and promote the new political Principles adopted in France, has been stated in the former Report, and will be more detailed in the Sequel: But it
 seems

terms proper to your Committee here to mention some of the Letters of Two of the most active Members of the Corresponding Society, which shew their Adherence to the Cause of France in the present War; their Conviction of the Consistency between that Cause and their own Objects; and their Views even of availing themselves, if possible, of the Assistance of the French Arms in carrying their Designs into Execution.

Appendix B.
(N^o 1.)

In a Letter from Hardy to the United Societies at Norwich, dated the 17th October 1793, which is inserted in the Appendix, there is this remarkable Passage—"The Rejoicings for the Capture of Valenciennes were not confined to Norwich alone. The Ignorant every where else throughout the Nation betrayed their Imbecility on the Occasion; but the *insanity of a Town*, the slaughtering of Thousands of Human Beings; the laying waste whole Provinces, or the enslaving a Nation (*however great Evils they may be*) can only, for a small Space of Time, retard the Progress of Truth and Reason: *Be not disheartened therefore, pursue your Plan, instruct Mankind, and Constitutionally set your Faces against existing Abuses*: Be assured that many are our Friends, who only wait a favourable Opportunity openly to join us, while our Enemies have much enfeebled themselves and their Cause by arbitrary Exertions: Despotism is at its last Gasp: One or Two Campaigns more will terminate its Existence." And in a subsequent Letter from Margat to the United Societies at Norwich, dated in March last, the Sentiments expressed are still more striking:—"This Morning Ten Ships of War have left Spithead for the Channel, and it is reported that the British Fleet is out. Rumour, always magnifying Things, says, there are Seventy Sail of the French at Sea, if so, there must be a Number of Transports among them, and a DESCENT MAY PROBABLY BE THE CONSEQUENCE. For God's Sake, my worthy Friends, do not relax in the Cause of France—Continue as you have begun;—continue *solidate your own Societies,—unite with others;—persevere, and make no Doubt but sooner or later your Endeavours will be crowned with Success*." At the Time of writing this last Letter, Margat was no longer in a Situation to take a Part in the Proceedings of the Society, being then on Board the Vessel in which he was to be transported. But it appears to your Committee, that these Expectations from him are of no small Importance, considering the Share which he appears, by much concurrent Evidence, to have had, previous to his Conviction, in directing the Measures which were adopted; the uniform Approbation and Attachment which those Societies have shewn him since that Date; and above all, that these very Sentiments are addressed to the United Societies at Norwich, and that the Mention of an expected Descent from France is immediately followed by an Exhortation to them to proceed, with fresh Vigour, in the Pursuit of their Designs in this Country.

Appendix B.
(N^o 2.)

The same Spirit appears in a Letter from the Secretary of the Corresponding Society in the Month of January 1794: "*Now is the Time for us to do something worthy of Men, the brave Defenders of Liberty South of the English Channel are pursuing their Enemies, driving their Enemies before them like Chaff before the Wind.*"

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Your Committee place less Reliance on Accounts of Words used in Conversation than on Evidence resulting from written Documents; but they nevertheless think it proper to mention, that it has been distinctly stated in Evidence, that, in the Presence of Two or Three principal Members of the Corresponding Society, a Person (whose Name was mentioned) used the Expression, (speaking of the French, *that a Victory of theirs in Flanders was as useful to the Cause as a Victory in St. George's Fields*; and the same Person appears to have held a Conversation with these Members of the Society, relative to the Advantage which would be derived if the French could land 50,000 Men in this Country, to join those who should rise here.

Another leading Circumstance has appeared to your Committee, which, however inefficual it has naturally proved, furnishes a strong collateral Proof of the Extent of the Views entertained, and that no Means, however criminal, were neglected for promoting them. The Circumstance referred to, is a Design, which has been the frequent Subject of Conversation among some Members of the Corresponding Society, of endeavouring to seduce the Army from their Duty, and the actual Employment of emissaries to tamper with the Soldiers. In conformity with these Views, it also has appeared, that it was intended to prepare an Address to the Army; and a Paper has been discovered in Scotland, which has been already referred to, the Object of which was to endeavour to excite Disaffection in the Fencible Regiments in that Part of the Kingdom, and which has actually been circulated with much Industry among the Soldiers of that Description.

Various other Schemes of the most daring and criminal Nature are also stated, on the Evidence of Persons who were present, to have been at different Times the Subject of Conversation among Persons, the greatest Part of whom were Members of this Society. It even appears, that a Project has been particularly and repeatedly agitated among them, of striking a sudden Blow, and beginning by securing the Royal Family, and the Members of both Houses of Parliament, with the Hope (as it was expressed) "that the Army, being without Leaders, would no longer oppose their Attempts." Particular Individuals have been pointed out in these Conversations, as Objects of personal Vengeance for their Public Conduct. Evidence has been given of Discourses held concerning the Release of the Delegates of the Scotch Convention, while on board the Transport in the River. An Attack on Newgate was meditated, according to a particular Plan referred to in the Conversation, with the View of releasing the Prisoners. A similar Conversation was held with respect to an Attack on the Tower; and in the Letter from the Secretary of State, which has been inserted in a former Part of the Report, it appears that there is direct Evidence of a Plan regularly concerted at Edinburgh, for seizing, at an appointed Time, all the Public Offices in that City, the Banks, and the principal Members of the Courts of Justice; and for making a similar Attempt (in consequence of a Secret Concert among the Members of the Societies in different Places) at One and the same Time, in some of the most considerable Towns in Scotland.

Your Committee do not state the various Circumstances which have been enumerated in this Part of the Report, as showing that these extensive Projects, as far as relates to England, were as yet regularly digested, or

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in sufficient Forwardness for actual Execution; but the Evidence before them gives them every Reason to believe that those Views have been deliberately entertained, and made the repeated Subject of Conversation; and they cannot but consider them as strong Indications of the Principles and Intentions of the Parties concerned, and of the Nature of the Measures which might have been expected if they had proceeded, without Interruption, in increasing their Numbers, and in providing Arms in the different Modes already stated.

There remains another Circumstance which, however, as far as it has yet been investigated, is traced distinctly only to Two Individuals, both of whom were Members of the Corresponding Society, and principally concerned in some of their most remarkable Transactions: Whether any other Members of the Society were or were not acquainted with it, has not appeared to your Committee. Three Copies have been produced to your Committee (in all material Parts conformable to each other) of a Paper which purports to be a Draft of Resolutions intended to be proposed at the Meeting which took place at Chalk Farm on the 14th of April 1794. From the Blank left for the Place of Meeting, it seems probable that it was prepared before that Place was fixed upon: The Resolutions are different from those which passed at the Meeting, and there is no Reason to believe that they were in Fact proposed there; but distinct Evidence has been given of the Hand Writing being that of the Person in whose Possession One of the Copies was found, who is also proved to have shown them as the Resolutions which he intended should be proposed at the Meeting; and the Two other Copies were found among the Papers of one of the most active Members of the Society, who appears, previous to the Meeting at Chalk Farm, to have been appointed, in Conjunction with some others, to arrange the Measures to be adopted, and at whose Suggestion (subsequent to that Appointment) the Meeting is stated to have been postponed beyond the Time originally proposed, because (as he is said to have represented) more Time was necessary to make known the Sentiments of the Society in bold and nervous Resolutions. Your Committee think it right here to insert the Paper itself, on which they will forbear to make any Comment.

" At a General Meeting of the London Corresponding Society, held at
" on Monday, the 14th Day of April, 1794.

" Citizen ——— in the Chair,

" Resolved, That all Sovereign, Legislative, and Judicial Powers are the
" Rights of the People; and though the People have delegated those their
" Original Powers to others, in Trust, for the Benefit of the Community, yet
" the Rights themselves are reserved by the People, and cannot be abso-
" lutely parted with by the People to those Persons who are employed to
" conduct the Business of the State.

" Resolved, That the Constitution of England is held by the King,
" Lords, and Commons, and other Officers appointed by the People, in
" Trust, for the Benefit of the People; and though these Trustees may re-
" gulate and improve the Constitution, yet they cannot alter or subvert it
" without committing Treason against the Nation.

" Resolved,

" Resolved, That *Magna Charta*, or THE GREAT CHARTER OF
 " THE LIBERTIES OF ENGLAND, made in the Reign of King
 " John; THE PETITION OF RIGHTS, affirmed to by Parliament in
 " the Reign of King Charles the 1st; and the several Laws made at and
 " in Consequence of the Glorious Revolution in the Year 1688, are de-
 " claratory of those Parts of the Constitution of England, which are in and
 " by them respectively declared.

" Resolved, That the Office of KING of England was not instituted
 " by the People merely as an Office of Profit and Honour to the King,
 " but he was so appointed as chief Trustee and Guardian of the Con-
 " stitution and Rights of the People; and that important and laborious per-
 " sonal Duties are annexed to the Royal Office, the Objects of which are,
 " to promote the Good of the People, and preserve their Rights in full
 " Vigour from Innovation and Corruption.

" Resolved, That it is the Duty of the King to preserve the Constitution
 " of England and the Rights of the People against every Encroachment;
 " and, in order to enforce that Duty, the following Oath is required to be
 " taken by every King on his Accession to the Throne of Great Britain;
 " to wit: The Archbishop or Bishop shall say—Will you solemnly pro-
 " mise and swear to govern the People of this Kingdom of England, and
 " the Dominions thereto belonging, according to the Statutes in Parliament
 " agreed on, and the Laws and Customs of the same."

" The King or Queen shall say, " I solemnly promise so to do." Arch-
 " bishop or Bishop—" Will you to your Power cause Law and Justice
 " in Mercy to be executed in all your Judgments?" ANS. " I will."

" After this, the King or Queen, laying his or her Hand on the Holy
 " Gospels, shall say—" The Things which I have before promised I will
 " perform and keep; So help me God."—and then shall kiss the Book.

" Resolved, That his present Majesty King George the Third, on his
 " Accession to the Throne of these Realms, did solemnly take the said
 " Oath.

" Resolved, That the Constitutional Rights of the People have been vio-
 " lated, and that it is the Duty of the People, in the present alarming Crisis,
 " to assemble and enquire into the Innovations or Infringements which have
 " been made upon the Rights of the People, and how far the Declarations
 " of the Constitution, as they were settled at the aforesaid Revolution, re-
 " main in Force, and which of them have been violated, and by whom;
 " and also whether such Innovations, Infringements, and Violations, have
 " been committed from the Negligence or Corruption of those who have
 " been intrusted with the Government of the State.

" Resolved, That this Society do invite the People to meet in their re-
 " spective Neighbourhoods, to elect One or more Person or Persons as
 " Delegates to meet in a Convention, to be held on the Day of
 " next, at such Place as shall be appointed by the Secret Committee
 " of this Society; and that the Delegates so elected do forthwith transmit
 " to the Secretary of this Society, N^o 3 Piccadilly, London, the Vouchers
 " of

" of their several Elections, in order that the Place of Meeting may be
 " duly notified to them.

" Resolved, That it is the Right and the bounden Duty of the People
 " to punish all Traitors against the Nation, and that the following Words
 " are now not a Part of the Oath of Allegiance; to wit, " I declare that
 " it is not lawful, upon any Pretence whatever, to take Arms against the
 " King."

Before the Committee quit this Part of the Subject, they think it not im-
 material to take some Notice of the different Means used to disseminate such
 Principles as have been stated through the lower Orders of Society, and to
 familiarise their Minds, by every possible Artifice, to such Ideas as might pre-
 pare them to be the Instruments of the most dangerous and desperate Designs.
 Some of these Means may at First Sight be considered as too trivial to be men-
 tioned on an Occasion of this Importance; but they appear to your Committee
 in a very different Light, when they recollect that an essential Part of such a
 Plan as has been in Agitation was to seduce and corrupt the thoughtless and unin-
 formed, and to make use of the Channels of Communication best adapted to
 this Purpose. The Appearance of Insignificance and Levity, which belongs at
 First Sight to this Part of the System, is, in Truth, only an additional Proof
 of the Art and Industry with which it has been pursued. The Mea-
 sures employed for this Purpose appear to have been deliberately prepared,
 and every Contrivance used to seize them (in the Shape most likely to
 captivate Attention) with the ordinary Occupations or Amusements of those
 on whom they were intended to operate. Accordingly Lectures have been de-
 livered on Political Subjects, calculated from their very Extravagance to
 catch the Attention of the Audience, and in the Course of them every
 Topic has been employed that could inflame their Minds, alienate them
 from the Laws and Constitution of their Country, and habituate them to Prin-
 ciples of Sedition and Rebellion. The most violent Publications to the same Ef-
 fect have been secretly, but generally, circulated in Hand Bills, both in the Me-
 tropolis and in the remote Parts of the Country. Every Point that could excite
 Discontent, according to the Passions, Interests, or Prejudices of different Classes,
 has been successively dwelt on, and always in such a Manner as to connect it with
 the leading Design. The Attempt to accomplish this End has appeared in the
 Shape even of Play Bills and Songs; Seditious Toasts; and a studied Selection
 of the Tunes which have been most in use in France since the Revolution, have
 been applied to the same Purpose, of endeavouring to render deliberate Incentives
 to every Species of Treason familiar to the Minds of the People.

HAVING thus stated the Points which the Committee have thought it
 material separately to lay before the House, they will now proceed to those Par-
 ticulars which will give a full and distinct View of the Rise, Progress, and Nature
 of the general Design with which the Facts already stated are essentially con-
 nected; for this Purpose your Committee will state in their Report the Points which

which appear most worthy of Attention, inserting in the Appendix a more particular Statement of the several Proceedings to which they refer. In doing so, it will be necessary to advert to Transactions, some of which took place at an early Period, and have already attracted Observation; but which it is nevertheless material to insert in the Order in which they took place, because they are highly important in explaining more recent Proceedings, and giving a connected View of the whole System.

The Period from which it appears to your Committee material to trace in this View the Proceedings of the Society for Constitutional Information, is that of the Publication of the Pamphlet so well known under the Title of "Rights of Man," by Thomas Paine."

Your Committee have already referred, in their former Report, to the Approbation given by the Society to this Work, and this is One of the Points on which they should not think it necessary now to dwell, if they did not feel it essential to the Object before stated, of developing the Rise and Progress of the System which they are tracing, to call the Attention of the House to the leading Features of a Work thus approved and recommended, in order to compare it with subsequent Transactions of which it may be considered as the Foundation.

In this Pamphlet, published in the Year 1791, the National Assembly of France was represented as occupied in establishing a Constitution founded on the Rights of Man, and the Authority of the People, the only Authority on which [it was stated] Government had a Right to exist in any Country; Monarchy and Hereditary Succession were treated as Absurdities, the Revolution of 1638, and the Sanction of the House of Hanover, were also made the Subject of Ridicule; and a Distinction was drawn between Two Modes of Government, which were stated to prevail in the World: First, Government by Election and Representation; and, secondly, Government by Hereditary Succession. The former generally known by the Name of Republic, the latter by that of Monarchy and Aristocracy. On the 23d March 1791, the Society Resolved, "That the Thanks of the Society should be given to Mr. Thomas Paine, in the Terms expressed in the Copy of their Resolution of this Day," inserted in the Appendix. A Continuation of Paine's Book, intitled "Rights of Man, Part the Second, 'combining Principle and Practice,'" was published early in 1791, in which the Principles of the British Constitution were again attacked; the Principles on which the French Constitution, accepted by the King in 1791, had been established, were approved, with an Exception of the Hereditary Succession to the Crown: This Pamphlet, recommending the Overthrow of the British Constitution, and the Establishment of a Democratical Senate, as the sole Legislative and Executive Power of the State, was also circulated with great Industry, and the Society for Constitutional Information, on the 16th of March 1791, expressed their Approbation of the Work, in Answer to a Letter from the Manchester Constitutional Society, conveying the Thanks of that Society to Mr. Paine. On the 23d of March, 1791, the Constitutional Society at Sheffield applied to the London Society, that Twelve of their Members might be admitted as associated Members of the London Society, and there appears in the Books of the

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London

Appendix C.
23 Mar. 1791.

Appendix C.
16 Mar. 1791.

Appendix C.
23 March 1791.

London Society a printed Paper of the Sheffield Society, in which that Society declares, that the Practice as well as the Principle of Government was laid down in the Works intitled, "Rights of Man, Part the First and Second," in a Manner *so clear and irresistibly convincing*, that the Society resolved to give their Thanks to Mr. Paine for those Publications.

Other Entries, expressive of Approbation of the same Works, and of other seditionous Publications, frequently appear in the same Books during the Course of the Year 1791.

Appendix C.
1791.

In Easter Term, 1792, an Information was filed in the Court of King's Bench, by the King's Attorney General, against Thomas Paine, for writing and publishing the last Pamphlet, on which he was convicted in December 1792. During this Prosecution another Pamphlet was published, under the Title of "An Address to the Addressers on the late Proclamation, by Thomas Paine." This Pamphlet, after stating that "Two Revolutions had taken place, those of America and France," added, "both of them have rejected the *monarchical* compared System of the English Government." "America has declared against all Hereditary Government, and established the Representative System of Government only; France has entirely rejected the Aristocratical Part, and is now discovering the Absurdity of the Monarchical, and is approaching fast to the Representative System." The Pamphlet then treats Monarchy, and every Species of Hereditary Government, as a Fraud and Imposition; asserts "for a Nation to be free it is sufficient that she wills it;" treats the Reform of Parliament by Parliament itself as absurd; denies the Power of Parliament to reform any Part of the Constitution; asserts that it is not a Subject cognizable before Parliament, and that the Right, and the Exercise of that Right, appertain to the Nation only, and that the proper Means is by a *National Convention, elected for the Purpose by all the People*; that such a Body, empowered and supported by the Nation, would have Authority to demand Information upon all Matters necessary to be enquired into, and the Nation would decree its own Reforms. The Pamphlet then states that the Plan and Organization of a Convention was easy in Practice; and proceeds to shew the Manner in which, supposing the Inhabitants of England to be Seven Millions, a Convention of 1,000 Members might be elected in an orderly Manner; adding, that "a Convention of 1,000 Persons, fairly elected, would bring every Matter to a decided Issue." This latter Pamphlet was not made the Subject of any express Resolutions of the Society, but during the Prosecution of Mr. Paine for the former Work, the Society for Constitutional Information entered into a Subscription to defray his Expenses, and encouraged the like Support from other Societies, as appears by several Entries in the Books of the Society. And this Mark of their Approbation of his Principles having been continued after the Publication last mentioned, seems to afford a full Proof that this Circumstance had made no Change in the Sentiments of the Society towards him.

P. 37.

P. 51.

P. 60.

P. 66.
67.

P. 71.

Appendix C.
1792.

Appendix C.
30. March 1791.

The Principles laid down in these Publications appearing thus to be approved and sanctioned by the Society, will be found to be gradually and successively adopted and acted upon in their Proceedings. On the 30th March 1791, the
London

London Corresponding Society sent to the Society for Constitutional Information several Resolutions, among which were the following :

- " That every Individual has a Right to share in the Government of
" that Society of which he is a Member, unless incapacitated.
- " That nothing but Non-age, a Privation of Reason, or an Offence
" against the general Rules of Society, can incapacitate him."

These Resolutions, containing the Principle of Universal Suffrage, were adopted without Reserve, and with strong Expressions of Approbation, by the Constitutional Society.

On the 20th of April following, a Declaration from a Society in Southwark appears entered in the Books of the Constitutional Society, with their Thanks for the Communication. This Declaration expresses more fully the Grounds on which the Societies intended to proceed, adopting many important Principles which had been made the Foundation of the French Revolution, in the following Terms :

Appendix C.
20-April 1792.

- " That all Civil and Political Authority is derived from the People.
- " That equal active Citizenship is the unalienable Right of all Men,
" Minors, Criminals, and Insane Persons excepted.
- " That the Exercise of that Right, in appointing an adequate *Representative Government*, is the wisest Device of Human Policy, and the
" only Security of National Freedom."

The Resolutions of the Sheffield Society having suggested Universal Suffrage, and the Southwark Society having added the general Idea of a *Representative Government*, a Society, called The Norwich Revolution Society, on the 16th of April 1792, sent a Letter to the Constitutional Society, entered in the Minutes of their Proceedings on the 4th of May 1792, in which there is this Passage :

Appendix C.
4-May 1792.

- " This Society is willing to hope the Redress of every existing Grievance
" at the Hands of a Government resulting from an extraordinary Convocation,
" in 1688, of all who had at any preceding Time been elected Representatives of the People, assisted by the Hereditary Counsellors of the Nation, and
" a peculiar Deputation from the Metropolis, which *National Constituting Assembly* gathered for Mischance a King of the House of Stuart."

It seems evidently to be the Intention of this Passage to represent the Revolution of 1688 as a Precedent for a *National Constituting Assembly*, and to shew under that Authority the indirect Recommendation of the Proceedings and Terms which have recently been adopted in France.

This Communication, with others from different Societies at Norwich, were followed by a Resolution, expressing that the Society for Constitutional Information

Appendix C. 4 M-7 1791. motion received them, with *heart-felt Satisfaction*, and desired earnestly to con- sider and co-operate with those Societies in their laudable Objects.

They also elected Twelve Members of the Norwich Society affiliated Members of their own Society.

And they added a Resolution, that a Committee should be appointed to con- sider whether any and what Communication should be made, and by what Means, by the Society, with the Society of Friends of the Constitution at Paris.

Appendix C. 11 May 1792. It appears by Entries of the 11th of May 1792, that "The Society of " Friends of the Constitution at Paris," mentioned in the former Resolution, were the Jacobin Club there; and on the same Day it was resolved that there should be a Communication with that Club; and an Address was read and agreed to, and ordered to be signed by the Chairman, and transmitted to Paris.

Appendix C. 9 Novr 1792. Towards the Close of the same Year, and some Time subsequent to the Revo- lution of the 10th of August, which finally destroyed all Traces of Monarchy in France, the Society resolved to address the National Convention, which was then invested with the whole Legislative and Executive Government, and was assembled for the Purpose of framing a new Constitution, and proceeding to the Trial of the King. This Paper is conceived in Terms which leave no Room to doubt of the Views of those who framed it. The Address files the Convention "*Representatives of a Sovereign People, and Benefactors of Mankind!*" It rejoices that the Revolution in France had arrived at that *Point of Perfection which enabled the Society to address the Convention by this Title*; and it declares that that is the only Title that can accord with the *Character of true Legislators*: It speaks of the Proceedings of the 10th of August as a glorious Victory, which had finally prepared the Way for a Constitution, which the Society trusted the Convention would establish on the Basis of Reason and Nature. It represents the Proceedings of the Convention as Labours in the Work of Human Happinefs, and adds, "THE BENEFITS WILL IN PART BE OURS, but " the Glory will be all your own; and it is the Reward of your Perseverance; " it is the Prize of Virtue." Then, drawing a Comparison between the State of Liberty in England, America, and France, it not only gives a decided Preference to the American Republic over the British Monarchy, but treats the Splendor of the French Revolution as the Object of the highest Admiration.

This Address was ordered to be presented by Two of the Members of the Society at the Bar of the National Convention; and it was presented ac- cordingly.

Appendix C. 12 Oct. 1792. But the Terms of this Address are not the only Evidence on this Head. An Address, framed a short Time before by the London Corresponding Society, which had been communicated to the Constitutional Society, and had received their express Approbation, and which was presented likewise to the French Convention, contained Passages clearly expressing the same Intent, and sug- gesting the Idea of a triple Alliance (not of Crowns, but) of the People, of America,

America, France, and Britain, to give Freedom to Europe, and Peace to the whole World.

These Transactions are rendered still more remarkable by the verbal Address of the Deputies at the Time of presenting the Address of the Society, and by the Answer of the President, which they transmitted. The Letters of the Deputies to the Society have been found among the Papers of that Society, together with a Copy of the Address of the Deputies, and the Answer of the President. In the First, after pointing out their Wishes to effect in their own Country a Revolution similar to that made in France, the Deputies consider the Example of France as having made *Revolutions easy*; and add, that it would not be extraordinary if, in a short Space of Time, the French should find Addresses of Congratulation to a *National Convention of England*; and the President in his Answer says, "The Moment, without Doubt, approaches when the French will bring Congratulations to the *National Convention of Great Britain*."

On the 7th of December 1793, the Letter of the Deputies was read in the Society, as appears by an Entry in their Books.

Appendix C.

In January 1793, Barrere, Roland, and St. André were elected (as has been mentioned in the former Report) Honorary Members of the Society; and on the 1st February, the Speeches of Barrere and St. André were ordered to be entered on the Books of the Society, and this Resolution ordered to be printed in the Newspapers, which it actually was on the 5th of February 1793.

Appendix C.
at 6 15 Jan.
at Feb. 1793.

The Circumstance of the Time at which this marked Approbation was publicly given to leading Members of the National Convention of France, would render this Measure of itself a strong Indication of the Views of the Society, and as such it was referred to by the Committee in their former Report.

But on more particular Reference to the Speeches themselves, which were thus recommended to Public Notice, this Transaction will be found to be of much more Importance; it is not barely an Approbation of leading Persons professing Principles, and pursuing Measures, hostile to the general Interests of the Country: The Speeches were delivered for the express Purpose of accelerating the Condemnation and Execution of the French King. The Doctrines contained in them directly relate to the precise Object of a *National Convention*, and to the Question of the personal Responsibility of Sovereigns; they contain a Statement of the Rights, Duties, and Functions of such an Assembly; which cannot be supposed to have been recommended to the Public Attention for any other possible Purpose than that of laying the Foundation of a similar Proceeding in this Country, and that with the direct Intention of employing it for the Destruction of the Sovereign, and the utter Subversion of the Constitution. This Conclusion will be fully justified by an Extract from the Speeches in Question, which are expressed in Terms so remarkable, that the Committee cannot too strongly recommend them to the Attention of the House.

The following Passage is extracted from St. André's Speech.

" Your Rights to decide the Fate of the King, arises from your being a
" Revolutionary Assembly created by the Nation in a State of Inter-
" rection."

Barrere's Speech is much more full and more systematically reasoned; it is divided into several Heads, from which the following Extracts are taken.

" This Proceeding (speaking of the Trial of the King) is of the highest
" Importance to Public Order, absolutely necessary to the Existence of
" Liberty, and connected with whatever is held most sacred by the Na-
" tion. From the Calmness and Temper which have distinguished the
" Deliberations of the Convention on this Occasion, it may be foreseen
" that Justice and Reason will direct its ultimate Sentence. History will
" record the striking Contrast between Kings, who in the Midst of the
" Dissipation of Courts sign Proscriptions and Death Warrants for the
" Destruction of Thousands of Citizens, and the Representatives of the
" People, who deliberate with Wisdom and Caution on the Punish-
" ment of a single Despot.

" It is the Destiny of Kings to be the Occasion of the Calamities of the
" People, whether they remain on their Thrones, or whether they are
" precipitated from them.

" P A R T II.

" Whether the *Person of the King* be inviolable.

" The People of Paris, by making an holy Insurrection against the King
" on the 10th of August, deprived him of his Character of Inviolability.
" The People of the other Departments applauded this Insurrection, and
" adopted the Consequence of it. The People have therefore formally
" interposed to destroy this Royal Inviolability. The very Consent of the
" People rendered the Person of the King inviolable. The Act of Insur-
" rection was a just Repeal of that Consent, and was founded on the same
" Grounds of Law as the Consent itself.—The King's Person is inviolable
" only with relation to the other Branches of the Legislature, but not with
" relation to the People."

" P A R T III.

" Whether an *Appeal* shall be made to the People?

" The People is the Sovereign.

" A Conven-

" A Convention differs from an ordinary Legislature in this Respect.—
 " A Legislature is only a Species of superintending Magistracy, a Moder-
 " ator of the Powers of Government.—A Convention is a perfect Repre-
 " sentation of the Sovereign.—The Members of the Legislative Assembly
 " acted in August upon these Principles.—In summoning the Convention
 " they declare, that they saw but one Measure which could save France;
 " namely, to have Recourse to the supreme Will of the People, and to
 " invite the People to exercise immediately that inalienable Right of So-
 " verignty which the Constitution had acknowledged, and which it could
 " not subject to any Restriction. The Public Interest required that the
 " People should manifest their Will by the Election of a National Con-
 " vention, formed of Representatives invested by the People with unlimited
 " Powers.—The People did manifest their Will, by the Election of that
 " Convention.—The Convention being assembled, is itself that Sovereign
 " Will which ought to prevail.—It would be contrary to every Principle,
 " to suppose that the Convention is not alone exclusively the Expression
 " of the general Will.

" The Powers of the Convention must, from the very Nature of the
 " Assembly, be unlimited with respect to every Measure of general Safety,
 " such as the Execution of a Tyrant.—It is no longer a Convention if it
 " has not Power to judge the King.

" A Convention is a constituent Body, i. e. a Body that is to make a
 " Constitution for the People.—A Legislature makes Laws under an estab-
 " lished Constitution, and in conformity to it. It is Despotism when in
 " the ordinary and permanent Establishment of a State there is no Separa-
 " tion of Powers; but it is of the very Essence of a constituent Body to
 " concentrate for the Time all Authority.—It is the very Nature of a Na-
 " tional Convention to be the temporary Image of the Nation, to unite in
 " itself all the Powers of the State, to employ them against the Enemies of
 " Liberty, and to distribute them in a new Social Compact called a Con-
 " stitution.

" Behold that Constituent Assembly which laid the first Foundations of
 " your Liberty! Behold that Revolutionary Genius! which broke through
 " every Impediment, extended its delegated Authority, created its own
 " Powers according to the Emancipation of Liberty, and as the occasional
 " Wants of the People, deformed all Prejudices by the Force of that
 " Public Opinion to which it gave Birth, obliterated all Privileges, abo-
 " lished all the Parliaments, stamped the Form and Tenor of all Prop-
 " erty, as well as the Mark and Sign of all Value, and made a perfect
 " King its Presence! Nothing was wanting to immortalize that Assembly,
 " but to have delivered France from the Calamity of Kings Government,
 " and to have relieved you from the Duty of judging the *act* of your
 " Kings.

" With

" With this Example before your Eyes, you hesitate even in the Fifth
 " Step of your Duty.—Am I then no longer in the Midst of that National
 " Convention, whose honourable Mission it was to destroy Kings and
 " Royalty ?"

HAVING thus traced the Proceedings of the Society for Constitutional Information to the Period when the Commencement of the War with France necessarily interrupted the Development of their Principles and Designs by their Correspondence with that Country, your Committee will now lay before the House such Particulars as relate to their Proceedings at Home, in Concert with the London Corresponding Society, and with the several Societies in different Parts of the Country, during the same Period.

From these it will appear—That not only the London Corresponding Society, but all the principal Societies in the Country, have been regulated under the immediate Auspices of the Society for Constitutional Information, and have, both in their Origin and Progress, looked up to that Society for their Guidance and Direction in the Pursuit of their common Object :

That particularly since the Institution of the Corresponding Society, which appears from a very early Period to have had an intimate Connection with the Society for Constitutional Information, a System of General Correspondence has been established, by Means of which the Principles of that Society (such as they have been already stated) have been widely diffused and disseminated through the Country :

That throughout the Whole of this extensive Correspondence, the strongest Marks appear of an almost universal Agreement and Co-operation among the Country Societies, not only in the general Principles to which your Committee has already referred, but also in the Nature and Frame of the Societies, in the System of Concert and Delegation, and in the particular Object of forming a National Convention for the Purpose of carrying their Principles into full Effect, and that Traces of this Design are to be found in a greater or less Degree at a very early Period of this Correspondence.

The London Corresponding Society was instituted in January 1792. A general Account of the Plan according to which it was formed and distributed into different Divisions, has already been given in the last Report, and a List of the Number of Divisions, which had been gradually established, has been found among the Papers in the Possession of the Secretary.

Appendix D.
 14/March 1792.

In one of the First Communications from the London Corresponding Society to the Society for Constitutional Information, they state that " The Delegates
 " of the Corresponding Society think it their Duty to acquaint the Constitutional
 " Society, without Delay, of the Subscription begun amongst several of their
 " Divisions for the Defence of the Prosecution said to be commenced against that
 " worthy

" worthy Member of the Constitutional Society, Mr. Thomas Paine, in consequence of his valuable Publication, intitled "The Rights of Man;" and
 " that they had no Doubt that a numerous Body would be found to follow an
 " Example, so just in itself, and so essential to the Support of that final Portion
 " of Liberty which the People of England are still supposed to enjoy. That
 " the Approbation and Encouragement which their feeble Endeavours had met
 " with from the Constitutional Society, made them desirous of writing more
 " strongly and more immediately with that Society, and for this Purpose they
 " wished that Six of their Members might be admitted into the Constitutional
 " Society, after the Manner of those received from the Societies at Sheffield and
 " Norwich."

The London Corresponding Society signify that they are highly favoured by the Readiness of the Constitutional Society to admit Six of their Members, and that their Sense of the Favour so conferred will be best expressed by their close Attendance at the instructive Meetings of the Constitutional Society, and by their constant Endeavours to forward the so beneficial, and so much wanted Reforms of Parliamentary Representation.

London Corresponding Society, }
 6 July, 1792.

The following Series of Extracts is taken from the Correspondence, both of the Society for Constitutional Information and of the London Corresponding Society, with the several Societies instituted in the Country.

Appendix D.

The First is a Letter from Sheffield to the Secretary of the Constitutional Society, dated 15th January 1792, stating that the Society established at Sheffield humbly solicit the Advice and Assistance of the Constitutional Society for the Purpose of forming a Connection with all similar Societies in England; and adds, that Information of the Methods, Terms, and Manner of Application for the above Purpose, as likewise the Admission of One of their Members into the Constitutional Society, will be esteemed a particular Favour, and gratefully acknowledged. In the Postscript to the Letter, an Account is given of the Origin of the Sheffield Society; and it is stated, that it at first originated in an Assembly of Five or Six Mechanics, who from Conversation about the enormous high Price of Provisions, the unbounded Authority of the Monopolists of all Rank, from the King to the Peasant, and the Waste of the Public Property by Placemen, Pensioners, Luxury, and Debauchery, together with the Blockading of the People, concluded that nothing but Ignorance in the People could suffer the natural Rights of every Free Man to be thus violated. They formed a Society, which was gradually increasing, and divided into separate Bodies. They re-published Paine's Rights of Man at the low Price of 6d. each Copy, to which they proposed to annex an Abstract of the noted infamous Corn Bill of last Year.

Sheffield, }
 25 Jan. 1792.

The same Society at Sheffield, in a Letter to the Constitutional Society, mention that their Numbers increase, for that most of the Town and Villages in the Neighbourhood are forming themselves into similar Associations, and strictly adhere to the Mode of copying the Sheffield Society. They return Thanks for the kind Communications which they have received from the principal Members of the Constitutional Society; and they enclose a Parcel for

Sheffield, }
 14 March 1792.

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the Secretary of the London Corresponding Society, in Answer to a Letter of his, by which he had informed them, that there were in London a Number of Mechanics, Shopkeepers, &c. forming themselves into a Society, on the *second* Basis of the Rights of Man, and desiring to know the Manner of conducting this Business at Sheffield: In Answer to which, the Sheffield Society had given them their Manner of Proceeding, and hoped it might be of some Use, as the Improvement they were about to adopt was certainly the best for managing large Bodies in great and populous Towns, *viz.* dividing them into small Bodies or Meetings of Ten Persons each, and these Ten Persons to appoint a Delegate; Ten of these Delegates to form another Meeting; and *so on, delegating from One to another, till at last they are reduced to a proper Number for constituting the Committee or Grand Council.*

Sheffield, }
12 March 1792 }

The Society at Sheffield express their Determination to *obtain a radical Reform of the Country, as soon as Prudence and Discretion will permit, and to establish it upon that System which is consistent with the Rights of Man*; for these Reasons, they request, that certain Members of their Society may be admitted into the Constitutional Society, in order that the Society at Sheffield may be strengthened, and enabled to extend useful Knowledge from Town to Village, and from Village to Town, and that the whole Nation be justifiably enlightened and united in the same Cause; which, they say, cannot fail of being the Case, whenever the most excellent Works of Mr. Thomas Paine find Readers.

Manchester, }
23 March 1792 }

The Constitutional Society at Manchester transmit Copy of their Resolution to the Constitutional Society in London, in which they resolve that *their Thanks are due to Mr. Thomas Paine, for the Publication of the Second Part of the Rights of Man, containing Principle and Practice: They stile it a Work of the highest Importance to every Nation under Heaven, but particularly to this: They express their Hope, that in Consequence of the Effect of this Work a complete Reform in the present inadequate State of the Representation of the People will be accomplished; and that the other great Plans of Public Benefit which Mr. Paine has so powerfully recommended will speedily be carried into Effect.*

Norwich, }
24 March 1792 }

The Delegates of the United Constitutional Societies at Norwich communicate to the London Society for Constitutional Information a Number of Resolutions, in which they express their Happiness at the Admission of the Delegation from Sheffield, in order to form a Plan of General Information: They humbly beg to be admitted to the same Favour, and express *their Wish that all the Societies of a similar Kind in England were strongly and indissolubly united in one Patriotic Body*: They return their Thanks to Mr. Thomas Paine, for his First and Second Parts of the Rights of Man: They sincerely wish that he may see his Labours crowned with Success in the general Diffusion of Liberty and Happiness among Mankind: They signify that their Numbers are increasing; and they earnestly entreat all their Brethren to increase their Affections, in order to form *One Grand Extensive Union of all the Friends of General Liberty.*

In a Letter to the Secretary of the London Corresponding Society, the Society at Stockport return Thanks to the Corresponding Society, for their Kindness, which they say will be useful in the Formation of the Infant Society at that Place; that they stand much in Need of their Experience in this Particular. They state, that they have carefully perused the Address, of which a Parcel has been sent them by the London Corresponding Society; and observe on their Contents in general, that the Sentiments hardly rise to that Height which they expected from Men sensible of their full Claims to absolute and uncontrollable Liberty, *i. e. accountable to any Power which they have not immediately constituted and appointed.* They further state, that these are their Sentiments, whatever be those of the London Corresponding Society, though in the present State of Political Knowledge it may be prudent not to avow them openly; they desire to be informed of the Means of accomplishing their common Object; and they conclude with the following Words:

Stockport,
27 Decr. 1792. }

" We observe One Expression, which says, numerous other Reforms
" would undoubtedly take place, &c. &c.

" But we ask, How is that Parliament to be chosen? Can we expect it from
" the present Order of Things? *Would not the Evil be done away at Once*
" *by the People assembled in Convention!*—Does it appear probable that the
" odious Laws of which we complain will be abolished by any other
" Way? *Can the Grievances arising from Aristocracy be redressed, while the*
" *—— retains its present Authority in the Legislature? Is the universal Right*
" *of (justice) ever to be attained, while the B. maintain their Seats on the*
" *——?*

" Your Thoughts on these important Points, we most earnestly de-
" sire may be transmitted as soon as possible, not directed to the last, as
" we fear it will excite Suspicion."

" (Signed)

" —————"

A Letter from Margaret, (the President) to the Friends of Universal Peace and the Rights of Man, at Stockport, says, " With regard to the Publications
" of the London Corresponding Society, they are expressed in as strong Terms as
" Prudence will permit, yet plainly enough to convince the Public, that while we
" expect every Thing from an honest and Annual Parliament, nothing short of
" such a Senate, chosen by the whole Nation, will satisfy us."—The Letter proceeds
to state an Intention of countenancing the Struggle of the French Nation against
Despotism and Aristocracy, by addressing the French National Convention.

London Cor-
responding Socy. }
41 Dec. 1792. }

A Copy of the Address is enclosed, and a Concurrence of the Stockport Society is solicited. The Letter concludes thus: " If on the contrary you
" disapprove of that Mark of Zeal towards the only Nation that has hitherto un-
" dertaken to restore Mankind to their just Rights, please to communicate
" to us your Objections."

A Letter

the Ed. }
15 Oct. 1792. }

A Letter from the Editors of The Patriot, to the Secretary of the London Corresponding Society, expresses their Commendation of the laudable Spirit which has induced the London Corresponding Society to address the Convention of France; begs the Encouragement which they had given to the Society at Stockport; and exhorts the London Corresponding Society also to give it their Sanction, Advice, and Support; announces that several Societies have been formed within the last Three Weeks at Edinburgh, and that they had received some most spirited Communications from thence. The Letter concludes: "We
" clearly foresee that Scotland will soon take the Lead of this Country, and con-
" ceive it will be necessary to take the greatest Care that an universal Communi-
" cation should be constantly kept up between the several Societies, however
" distant, and that all should determine to act upon the same Principle, as near
" as may be, in a regular and active Union. It was by this Method that France
" became so thoroughly united, and we ought never to lose Sight of it."

A Letter from the Secretary to the Society at Stockport, to the Secretary of the London Corresponding Society, has these Terms.

Stockport, }
3 Nov. 1792. }

" I am directed by the *Friends of Universal Peace and the Rights of*
" *Man*, to inform you that we received Two Letters from you, the
" First dated September 21, requesting us to concert with you in trans-
" mitting to the French National Convention an Address signed by
" every Member, &c. &c.

" With respect to the *Substance* of this Letter, we believe that the
" *Case* of the French is that of every individual Person in Europe, that is
" not suffering as *Plunder*, or through Ignorance, Obstinacy, and Inat-
" tention, sit unconcerned, and will not be persuaded to consider, al-
" though inevitable Ruin should be the awful Consequence.

" We therefore think it highly necessary to add our friendly Aid, and
" Assistance, in order to stimulate the oppressed Friends of Freedom in France
" against all the Despot in Europe (who are combined against the just and
" equal Rights of Man) by assuring them that we view their signal Exer-
" tions and wonderful Victories with Admiration, together with the Extirpa-
" tion of treacherous Rascals, and the restoring to every individual his equal
" and inalienable Rights, as Fellow Men and Free Citizens; and that our
" Hearts are united with theirs as in One common Cause, considering us
" in a great Measure their Victory our Emancipation, together with their
" own.

" Yet, should it ever be the Case that our Ministry should be so per-
" sistent as, contrary to their pledged Faith of Neutrality, to join the exe-
" crable Band of Despots against the Cause of Freedom, we will stand for-
" ward, even to the hazarding our Lives, by using every justifiable Means
" to counteract their Machinations, and give to the Friends of Freedom
" all the Encouragement and Support which we severally unsupported
" can afford."

Letter

A Letter to the Secretary of the London Society for Constitutional Information, states that the People of Leicester are to have their First adjourned Meeting in a few Days, and that they stand in Need of a Sort of *Cred* for immediate Publication; and One from the Norwich Society states, that having found that the Friends of the People, and Society for Constitutional Information, do not exactly agree, they wish to know the Reason. That it appears to them that the Difference was this—The Friends of the People mean only a partial Reform, because they leave out the Words expressing the Duke of Richmond's Plan, and talk only of a Reform; while the Manchester People seem to intimate, by addressing Mr. Paine, that they were intent upon Republican Principles only; to come close to the main Question, they desire to know whether the Generality of the Societies mean to rest satisfied with the Duke of Richmond's Plan only, or whether it is their private Desire to *rip up Monarchy by its Root, and to place Democracy in its Stead* &c.—The Letter then gives an Account of the Plan which the Norwich Society wish to obtain, and which has already been moved for at their General Meeting, namely, a full and equal Representation of the whole Body of the People.

Leicester,
9 Nov. 1792. }

Norwich,
11 Nov. 1792. }

The Manchester Reformation Society state, that the Cause of Liberty goes on rapidly in that Town; their Numbers increase; and they desire to be admitted to correspond with the London Society for Constitutional Information.

Manchester,
13 Nov. 1792. }

A Society at Leicester request every Particular requisite to enable them to establish a Constitutional Society there, similar to that in London, and that at Manchester, Stockport, &c. They desire all that is necessary by the First Mail;—they state, that they want Laws, Orders, Principles, Creeds, Addresses, Declarations, and Resolutions; and a Letter from a Meeting at Coventry solicits the London Society for Constitutional Information to transmit a Plan of the Sheffield, or any other Society which they may think best adapted to produce the End of establishing a Constitutional Society at Coventry.

Leicester,
15 Nov. 1792. }

Coventry,
26 Nov. 1792. }

When the London Corresponding Society found that their Conduct began to excite Notice, they published a long Justification of it, which they communicated to the Society for Constitutional Information. This Paper, the professed Object of which is to prove the Moderation of the Society, and to vindicate them from the Imputation thrown out against them, concludes in the following Words:—"Let us wait, and watch the ensuing Session of Parliament, from which we have much to hope, and little to fear. The House of Commons may have been the Source of our Calamity—it may prove that of our Deliverance; should it not, we trust we shall not prove ourselves unworthy of our Forefathers, whose Exertions in the Cause of Mankind so well deserve our Imitation."

30 Nov. 1792.

Appendix C.
14 April 1793.

YOUR COMMITTEE have thus given a View of the different Proceedings to the Close of the Year 1792. Early in 1793, the joint Correspondence of the Two Societies in London with the Country Societies seems to have been directed to the *obscure* Purpose of obtaining Petitions to the House of Commons in Favour of a Reform in the Parliamentary Representation, and also Petitions from the same Societies against the Continuance of the War.—A Series of Letters relating to these Objects is inserted in the Appendix: But your Committee think it necessary to call the particular Attention of the House to Extracts from some Part of this Correspondence, from which it will appear, that the Measure of addressing Petitions to the House of Commons in 1793, on the Subject of Parliamentary Reform, was adopted without either any Approbation of that Mode of Application, or any Hope of Success in its professed Object; and that the Societies approved of those Positions, even in the execrable Language in which they were expressed, with no other View than that of accommodating themselves, for a Time, to supposed Prejudices and Circumstances, and of opening the Way to the Prosecution of their Design in that Mode which they have since actually pursued, and which appears even then to have been in their Contemplation. From some of these Letters it is evident, that the London Corresponding Society had, previous to the Month of March 1793 (although the Letter itself, in which they did so, has not been found) stated, for the Consideration of the Country Societies, Three Propositions:

First, A Petition to Parliament.
Secondly, A Petition to the King.
Thirdly, A Convention.

And in a subsequent Letter of the 4th of March, from the Corresponding Society to the Society at Sheffield, there is this Paragraph:

" With regard to petitioning Parliament, we are unanimously of Opinion, that such a Petition will not produce a Reform; yet from many Considerations we are now persuaded, that if every Society in the Island will send forward a Petition, we shall ultimately gain Ground, for as much as it will force the Members of the Senate repeatedly to discuss the Subject, and their Deliberations, printed in the different Newspapers, will most naturally weaken the Public Mind towards the Object of our Pursuit. The Nation, once informed that a Reform in Parliament is sought for in different Quarters, gives rise to Debates in the House of Commons (and is acknowledged in every Rank to be wanting) will begin to exercise their own Reason on the Subject;—arrived at that Period, we presume our Business will be nearly accomplished."

Norwich. }
March 1793. }

In a Letter from the United Political Societies at Norwich, dated 5th March 1793, to the Society for Constitutional Information, they state, that they see a great Propriety in Universal Suffrage and Annual Election; but wish to know what has been collected to be the Sense of the People; that the Corresponding Societies of London have recently submitted Three Propositions for their Investigation:

Whether

Whether a Petition to Parliament, or an Address to the King, or a Convention : They say, that they are a conquered People under that degrading Necessity—to flue their Grievances to the House of Commons, with a Request for Redress ; and should they refuse to grant their reasonable Petitions, they have still got (so Thanks to them) a formidable Engine that will convey the Petition to the remotest Parts of the Kingdom.—As to the Propriety of the Second, they say, they are dubious of its good Consequences.—Lastly, as to a Convention, they say, it is the *Objekt* that they pursue ; that they esteem any other Measure only in Subordination to it, and as having a Tendency to accomplish that desirable End ; but, they add, wishing to be in Union with their Brethren, they desire to know whether it is necessary to obtain Signatures to a Petition.

The Answer to this Letter from Norwich has been already mentioned in the former Report : It refers to the Three Questions stated, and contains the Paragraph inserted in the former Report.

Corresponding
Letter, 16 April
1793.

" Where, then, are we to look for the Remedy ?—to that Parliament of which we complain ?—to the Executive Power, which is implicitly obeyed, if not anticipated in Parliament ? or to ourselves, represented in some Meeting of Delegates for the especial Purpose of Reform, which we suppose you understand by the Term *Conventions* ?"—It then proceeds :

" Is it the End of each of these Propositions, that we ought to look to, and as Success in a good Cause must be the Effect of Perseverance, and the rising Reason of the Time, let us determine with Coolness, but let us persevere with Decision. As to a Convention, we regard it as a Plan, the most desirable and most practicable, so soon as the great Body of the People shall be courageous and virtuous enough to join us in the Attempt. Hitherto we have no Reason to believe that the Moment is arrived for that Purpose. As to any Petition to the Crown, we believe it hopeless in its Consequences. With respect to the last of the Proposals, we are at a Loss to advise. If the Event is looked to in the Voice which may be obtained from that Body to whom this Petition is to be addressed, which of us can look to it without the Prospect of an absolute Negative ? In this Point of View, therefore, it cannot require a Moment's Consideration.

" But if we regard the Policy of such a Measure, it may in our Apprehension be well worth considering as a warning Voice to our poster Legislature, and as a Signal for Imitation to the Majority of the People.

" Should such a Plan be vigorously and generally pursued, it would hold out a Certainty to our Fellow Countrymen, that we are not a Handful of individuals unworthy of Attention or Consideration, who desire the Restoration of the ancient Liberties of England ; but, on the contrary, it might bring into Light that Host of well-meaning Men, who, in the different Towns and Counties of this Realm, are silently but seriously anxious for *Reformation in the Government*.

" We exhort you with Anxiety to pursue your laudable Endeavours for the Common Good, and never to despair of the Public Cause."

The

The Letters of the Corresponding Society of the 17th May and 25th July 1793, and of the Norwich Societies of the 9th of July, and various Passages in the Proceedings of the Scotch Convention, and of those of the Society at Sheffield, will be found to contain additional Proofs of what has been represented to be the real View and Intention of presenting these Petitions; but being subsequent to the Time when these Petitions were presented, they will be more particularly referred to in stating the Transactions during the Remainder of the Year 1793, of which your Committee will proceed to take Notice.

Appendix C.
21.22 June 1793.

After the Rejection of the Petitions in May 1793, and the Determination of the House upon the Subject of a Change in the Representation in Parliament, the Correspondence inserted in the Appendix will shew that the Union and Concert between the Two Societies in London seem to have acquired additional Strength. It is soon after distinctly stated, *that more effectual Means than Petitions may be adopted*; and early in the Autumn of 1793, the joint Efforts of the Two Societies were directed to the Formation of a Convention at Edinburgh, to which Delegates were to be sent from London, and were invited from many of the Country Societies. Many of these Societies actually sent Delegates; and of those who did not several approved of the Measure, and only objected to the Time; while others, approving both of the Time and of the Measure, declined any Share in it on Account of their not having received a sufficiently early Notice, or of their being unable to afford the Expence with which it was necessarily attended.

Appendix C.
25. 28 Oct. 6 Nov.
and 6 Dec. 1793.

The immediate Foundations of these Proceedings appear to have been a Letter from the Corresponding Society, May 17th, 1793, to the Friends of the People at Edinburgh, which, after expressing their Desire *is unite, not only with each other, but with every other Society throughout the Nation*, proceeds: "Our Petitions, you will have learned, have all been unsuccessful; our Attention must now, therefore, be turned to some more effectual Means;—from your Society we would willingly learn them, and you, on your Part, may depend upon our adopting the firmest Measures, provided they are Constitutional; and we hope the Country will not be behind us."

A Letter from Skirving to Hardy, dated 25th May 1793, is inserted in the Appendix, and contains many Passages which appear to be very material, but which will be more particularly referred to in the Account of the Correspondence of the Scotch Convention.

On the 10th of June 1793, the Secretary of the Corresponding Society writes to the Secretary to the Constitutional Society at Birmingham: "We are entirely of your Opinion with regard to the Necessity of a *General Union*; and believe as you do, that when once the Country shall be so united, the Nerves of the Day will be forced to yield to the just Demand of a long and sore oppressed People."

A Letter from the Political Societies at Norwich, which appears to have been received by the Secretary of the London Corresponding Society, on the 25th of June 1793, contains the following Passage: "We received your friendly Letter wherein you stated Three Propositions; first, a Petition to His Majesty; or to Parliament; or, a National Convention. I gave my Opinion on the Subject to the Constitutional Society at London, and found their Ideas congenial to my own, viz. An Address to the King, *first*; a Petition

" Petition to Parliament, as a conquered People, tolerable ; a National Convention, if Circumstances permitted, best of all."

And in a Letter from the Secretary of the Corresponding Society, of the 25th of July 1793, which appears to be an Answer to the foregoing, it is said, " With regard to the Questions themselves, however Individuals may have made up their Minds on them, the Public seemed much to approve of the Mode of petitioning Parliament ; we accordingly acquiesced, and sent in a Petition, signed by nearly 6,000 Persons ; with this Letter you will receive a Copy of it, and of its Fate you are doubtless not unacquainted." After saying that their Firmness is not confined to Words, and that they will be foremost in asserting and recovering the lost Liberties of the Country, the Letter recommends to the Norwich Society to form a Junction with all others associated for the same Purpose throughout the Nation ; and above all *orderly and courageously to prepare themselves for the Event, as they cannot expect to possess their Rights without a Struggle* ; that it may be advantageous to Humanity, that they should throw themselves at first *as indignant oppressed People, in whom is not yet entirely extinct the Value of their Forefathers.*

In the Month of October the Resolutions were passed in the Society for Constitutional Information, and the London Corresponding Society, relative to the Convention at Edinburgh, which have been already taken Notice of.

Appendix C.

The Society for Constitutional Information at Sheffield infer, in a Letter to the London Constitutional Society, the following Extract from a Letter, which was sent to the Convention at Edinburgh :

Appendix E.
Sheffield,
16 Nov. 1793.

" That it would have given this Society the most heartfelt Satisfaction to have had a Delegation present at their approaching Convention, had we received timely Notice of their Wishes that it should be so : But unfortunately happens that all the Gentlemen belonging to the Society, which it would choose for so important a Business, are so previously engaged in Affairs which they cannot possibly postpone in so short an Interval, that it is not in our Power to comply with their Requisition on the present Occasion.

" This Society are all of Opinion, that to give such a Measure its full Effect, it would be necessary that the other Societies in South Britain should have Communication with each other on the Subject, and be able to ascertain that Delegations would be sent from, at least, a Majority of the Societies in this Part of the Kingdom. And, to evince that we should be happy to unite our Efforts with their's in One firm and settled Plan, we assure them, that if they think proper to fix another Meeting in January or February, or any other Time which may be more agreeable, and give us immediate Notice thereof, and that they wish to see Delegates from the several Societies in this Part of the Kingdom, we will write to all those we are in Correspondence with, to get such a Delegation as may be truly respectable and important."

In a Letter from the Constitutional Society at Leeds, dated 5th November 1793, to the Society for Constitutional Information in London, is the following Paragraph :

Appendix E.
Leeds,
5 Nov. 1793.

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" It

" It is with great Satisfaction we read your Letter, and approve of your
 " having elected your Delegates to serve upon such a laudable Under-
 " taking; but, if you meant for the Leeds Society to adopt the same Measures,
 " shall be glad if you will answer this immediately; as we are not acquainted
 " with the Time of their sitting, we fear our Delegates will be too late."

Appendix E.
 Birmingham.
 6 Nov. 1793.

A Letter from the Society of Birmingham to the London Constitutional Society states, that they had received a Letter from the Constitutional Society, which had obtained the Approbation of every Member present, and that they would at all Times concur with the Constitutional Society in any Measure that may have a Tendency to hasten the Return of departed Liberty; that the Object of the Mission of Delegates to the *Scottish Convention* is a Measure upon which depends the Regeneration of Britain from a State of Slavery to a State of Freedom and Happiness; and that the Society at Birmingham have only to regret that, at present, their Ability will not allow them to co-operate with the Constitutional Society, by sending a Delegate to the Convention at Edinburgh; and this they stile to be One of the Calamities of the War.

Appendix E.
 Coventry.
 19 Nov. 1793.

The Society at Coventry transmit to the London Constitutional Society the Copy of a Resolution of the 28th October 1793, relative to the Election of Delegates, communicating their Approbation of a Measure which they conceive peculiarly calculated to accelerate the Acquisition of the Object proposed.

Appendix F.

THE PROCEEDINGS of the Convention, which assembled at Edinburgh in the Close of 1793, appear to your Committee to have been of such Importance, and to throw so much Light upon the Subject of this Part of the Report, that it has been thought necessary to give a connected Account of them in this Place, with References to Extracts from the Minutes of that Assembly inserted in the Appendix; and, in order to render this Account more complete, it may be necessary shortly to recur to the Proceedings of Two other Meetings which had taken place at Edinburgh at an earlier Period.

A Number of Persons, styling themselves a General Convention of Delegates from the Societies of the Friends of the People throughout Scotland, appear, from the Papers laid before the Committee, to have assembled at Edinburgh on the 11th of December 1793, for the Purpose, as they alleged, of concerting Measures for obtaining a Redress of Grievances, and for restoring the Freedom of Election, and an equal Representation of the People in Parliament.—This Meeting was composed of a Number of Persons assembled from different Parts of Scotland, and delegated by the various Clubs and Societies which had lately been established in that Country under the Name of The Friends of the People.—They amounted to about 170, amongst whom were some Persons of a higher Situation and Rank in Life, most of whom however afterwards discontinued their Attendance.—Skirving, since convicted and transported by Sentence of the Court of Justiciary, acted as their Secretary, and continued unfavourably to act in that Capacity.

After

After sitting a few Days, this Convention appears to have adjourned to the End of April 1793, when they again assembled, though not in such Numbers as before, Skirving still officiating as their Secretary, and corresponding with all the Societies in Scotland, and several in England, on the Subject of a Reform in Parliament. This Convention separated in Four Days, and appointed their next Meeting to take place at Edinburgh on the 29th of October following.

About the Time when the First Convention separated, in April 1793, a Correspondence seems to have commenced between Skirving (the Secretary) and various Societies in England; and the System of uniting all these Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, in common Measures, appears to have been regularly acted upon. From a Variety of Letters found in the Possession of Skirving when apprehended at Edinburgh on the 5th December 1793, it appears that he corresponded, as Secretary of the Scotch Convention, with the following Societies;—

The Society for Constitutional Information, Crown and Anchor Tavern, London;

The London Corresponding Society;

The Society of the Friends of the People, Free Masons Tavern, London;

The Sheffield Constitutional Society;

Leeds Constitutional Society;

Nottingham Society for promoting a Parliamentary Reform; and

A Society at Norwich.

The Correspondence with the Sheffield Constitutional Society commences in April 1793.

Three Letters from their Secretary were found in the Possession of Skirving, to whom they are addressed.

The First of these, inclosing a Copy of the Petition then about to be presented to the House of Commons—The Second, inclosing a Set of Resolutions against the War, which the Secretary transmits, with a Request that they should be adopted by all the Societies in Great Britain—And the Third, dated the 27th of May, after acknowledging the Receipt of a Letter of the 16th of that Month from Skirving, communicating to the Sheffield Society the Proceedings of the Convention at Edinburgh, which separated in April, approves of its Proceedings, and states an Address made by their late President to the Sheffield Society, which, after complaining of the late Rejection of the Sheffield Petition in the House of Commons, declares, that a Reform in Parliament can *never be brought about but by the powerful Interposition of the great Body of the People.*

Vide Appendix F.
(N^o 1.)

The

Yide Appendix F.
(N^o 2.)

The Society of Leeds begin their Correspondence with Skirving, by a Letter of the 29th of May 1793, by desiring *fraternal Communication* with the Society of Edinburgh, requesting its Assistance and Instruction, and that though their Numbers are few, not exceeding 100, they are Men, and determined to instruct their Neighbours in their Common Interest.

Yide Appendix F.
(N^o 3.)

On the 13th of May 1793, the Friends of the People, Free Mason's Tavern, London, passed a Vote of Thanks to the Convention which had taken Place the Beginning of that Year, for their Zeal and Activity in the Cause of Parliamentary Reform, and recommended a Continuance of the same Spirit, Industry, and Temper, during the Recess of Parliament. This Vote appears to have been transmitted to Skirving in a Letter from the Secretary, which requests that the Vote of Thanks might be communicated to the various Societies in Scotland.

18 May 1793.

Yide Appendix F.
(N^o 4.)

On the 23d of July, the Secretary of the Friends of the People wrote another Letter to Skirving, (apparently in answer to a Letter from him on the Subject) in which is the following Passage—"the Plan of Delegates would be very improper in this Country at present. A very small Part of it indeed would be active for Reform. If such a Meeting is attempted, it will operate, like many rash Serps of Scots who wish well to the Cause, much to its Disadvantage."

23 July 1793.
Yide Appendix F.
(N^o 5.)

Another Letter, dated the 29th of October, from the Secretary of the Friends of the People in London, addressed also to Skirving, acknowledges the Receipt of several Copies of the *Tricks of Mice and Palmer*, which he says he will bind up with the Trial of Paine, and recommends to the Scottish Convention to avoid the Violence which has done Mischief to the Cause of Reform in England.

29 Oct. 1793.
Yide Appendix F.
(N^o 6.)

The Correspondence of the London Corresponding Society with Skirving, previous to May 1793, does not appear; but a Letter of the 17th of this Month, from the Secretary to Skirving, which has been already referred to, solicits a Renewal of Correspondence, and more intimate Co-operation.

To this an Answer was returned by Skirving, dated 24th May 1793, which has also been before referred to, and has the following remarkable Passages:

"If we sought only the Extermination of One Set of interested Men from the Management of National Affairs, that Place might be given to another Set, without affecting the *Fitals of the System adverse to Reform*, this might be easily accomplished; but to root up wide and deep seated Prejudices, to give effectual Energy to the Debates of Truth in Favour of Public Virtue and National Prosperity, in Opposition to Self and all its interested Habits, and to withstand and overcome the fatal Efforts of the Powers of Darkness, is the Work of the Whole, and not of a Part;—a Work to which Mankind, till this awful Period, were never adequate; because never, till now, disposed to fraternize."

"Let

" Let us begin in earnest to make up our Minds relative to the Extent of
 " Reform which we ought to seek, be prepared to justify it, and to controvert
 " Objections. Let us model the Whole in the Public Mind. Let us provide
 " every Stone and Ray of the Tabernacle which we would erect; so that when
 " the Tabernacles of Oppression in the Palaces of Ambition are broken down,
 " under the Madcaps and Follies of their Supporters, we may then, without
 " Anarchy and all dangerous Delay, erect at once our Tabernacle of Right-
 " ousness.

On the 5th of October the Secretary of the London Corresponding Society again writes to Skirving, highly approving of the Idea of a Convention, and expressing his Belief that the London Corresponding Society will send Delegates to it: " Our Freedom, as you justly observe, depends entirely on
 " ourselves, and upon our availing ourselves of this Opportunity, which
 " once lost may not be so soon recovered."

Vide Appendix E,
 § Oct. 1793.

On the 8th of November, he again writes to the Delegates Margaret and Gerald, then at Edinburgh, informing them of what had been doing in the Society since their Departure, and requests to be favoured " with the Number
 " of Delegates in the Convention, and the Number from England also, and
 " how the Civil and Military Power resistes your Meeting."

8 Nov. 1793.
 Vide Appendix F,
 (N^o 7.)

On the 29th of November he again writes to them, stating that the General Committee " are highly pleased with the proposed Union with our Northern
 " Brethren; and beg you will use every Exertion in your Power to establish that
 " desirable Union upon a firm and permanent Basis. It gives us great Pleasure
 " and Encouragement to hear that the Spirit of Liberty is so flourishing in the
 " North; and are happy to inform you that the same noble Spirit is making
 " a rapid Progress in the South."

29 Nov. 1793.

The Instructions from the Corresponding Society to Margaret and Gerald, dated the 24th of October 1793, signed by their Chairman and Secretary, were also found in the Possession of Skirving. They consist of Nine different Articles. By Article 1st, the Delegate is instructed, that " he shall on no Ac-
 " count depart from the original Object and Principles of this Society, namely,
 " the obtaining Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage by rational and law-
 " ful Means:

" 2^d. To support the Opinion that Representatives in Parliament ought to
 " be paid by their Constituents:

" 7th. That it is the Duty of the People to resist any Act of Parliament re-
 " pugnant to the original Principles of the Constitution, as would be every
 " Attempt to prohibit Associations for the Purpose of Reform."

The Instructions by the Society for Confidential Information to their Delegates were also found in the Possession of Skirving; the Purport of which have been already stated in the former Report of the Committee.

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There

13 Nov. 1793.

Appendix F.
(N^o 8.)

There was likewise found in the Possession of Skirving, a Letter from the Secretary of the Leeds Constitutional Society, addressed "to the Members of the " Scotch Convention," and which is inserted at full Length in the Appendix.

From the Papers produced to the Committee, it appears that this Convention did accordingly assemble at Edinburgh on the 28th of October last, to the Number of about 150 Persons; and after sitting Four Days, in the Hope of being joined by the Delegates from England, they separated, in the Apprehension that the English Delegates did not mean to attend.—Two Days afterwards Margaret and Gerald, with Two other Persons, One of them a Delegate from the London Society for Constitutional Information, and the other a Delegate from Sheffield, arrived in Edinburgh. Skirving immediately called together a new Convention, to meet upon the 19th of November, and in an Advertisement inserted in the News-paper called The Edinburgh Gazetteer, and by Hand Bills, strongly urged the Necessity of the Delegates throughout Scotland attending to this Meeting.

Appendix F.
(N^o 9.)

About the 4th or 5th of November, Messrs. Hamilton Rowan and Butler, Members of the Society of United Irishmen of Dublin, arrived at Edinburgh from Ireland, though with no immediate Commission on this Business; but during the Week they remained in that Place, they with the English Delegates, attended the Meeting of the General Committee of the Convention, in which it was agreed to receive these Two Gentlemen as Delegates from the Society of United Irishmen. Mr. Hamilton Rowan appears to have acknowledged, by voluntary Declaration before the Sheriff of Edinburgh, that he had been solicited by Letter from Scotland on the Subject of sending Delegates from the Society of United Irishmen to attend the Scotch Convention; but he declined mentioning the Names of the Person or Persons who had so corresponded with him.

This Convention accordingly met on the 19th of November, to the Number of about 160, and rather a greater Proportion of Country Delegates than before. Rowan and Butler were by this Time returned to Ireland. But the English Delegates remained, and regularly attended the Convention as long as it continued to meet.

During the Three first Days the Convention appears, from its Minutes, to have chiefly employed itself on Matters of Form; but having on the 22d November 1793, changed its Title to that of "The British Convention of United-gates of the People, assembled to obtain Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments," they, in almost every Particular, assumed the Style and Mode of Proceeding adapted by the National Convention of France. They divided themselves into Sections—Committees of Organization, Instruction, Finance, and Secretary, denominated their Meetings Sittings; granted Honours of Sittings; made honourable Mention in their Minutes of periodic Donations; entered their Minutes as made in the First Year of the British Convention, instituted Primary Societies, Provincial Assemblies and Departments; received from

from their Sessions a Variety of Motions and Reports—some of which have the Words “ *Vive la Convention* ” prefixed to them, and end with “ *ça ira* ”—and some dated “ *First Year of the British Convention, One and indivisible.* ”

Having at last, on the 28th of November, with peculiar Solemnity, passed a Resolution, which necessarily attracted the Attention of the Law Officers of the Crown, the Ringleaders, with all their Papers, were seized, early on the Morning of the 5th of December, and carried before the proper Magistrate for Examination. The Resolution alluded to, and which appears from the Minutes (Extracts from which are stated in the Appendix) to have been the Subject of frequent and deliberate Consideration, was deemed by the Convention as not expedient to be inserted immediately in its proper Place. The Insertion of it appears to have been postponed till the Close of the Convention, and a Blank was left for that Purpose in the Minutes. The Motion, with the Resolutions founded thereon, was discovered amongst the Papers of the Delegates from the Society for Constitutional Information in London, and is of the following Tenor :

“ Resolved, That the following Declaration and Resolutions be inserted
“ at the End of our Minutes, viz.

“ That this Convention, considering the calamitous Consequences of
“ any Act of the Legislature which may tend to deprive the Whole or
“ any Part of the People of their undoubted Right to meet, either by
“ themselves or by Delegation, to discuss any Id. matter relative to their
“ Common Interest, whatever of a public or private Nature, and holding
“ the same to be totally inconsistent with the First Principles and Safety of
“ Society, and also subversive of our known and acknowledged Constitu-
“ tional Liberties, do hereby declare, before God and the World, that we
“ shall follow the wholesome Example of former Times, by paying no
“ Regard to any Act which shall interfere against the Continuation of our
“ Country, and shall continue to assemble and consult of the best Means
“ by which we can accomplish a real Representation of the People,
“ and Annual Election, until compelled to desist by superior Force.

“ And we do resolve, That the First Notice given for the Introduction
“ of a Convention Bill, or any Bill of a similar Tendency to that passed
“ in Ireland in the last Session of their Parliament ;

“ Or any Bill for the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, or the
“ Act for preventing wrongful Imprisonment, and against undue Delays
“ in Trial in Great Britain ;

“ Or in case of an Invasion ; or the Admission of any Foreign Troops
“ whatsoever into Great Britain or Ireland ;

“ All or any One of these calamitous Circumstances, shall be a Signal
“ to the several Delegates to repair to such Place as the Secret Com-
“ mittee of this Convention shall appoint ; and the First Seven Members
“ shall have Power to declare the *Sittings permanent*, shall constitute a
“ Convention, and Twenty-one proceed to Business ;

“ The

" The Convention doth therefore resolve, that each Delegate, immediately on his Return Home, do convene his Constituents, and explain to them the Necessity of electing a Delegate or Delegates, and of establishing a Fund, without Delay, against any of these Emergencies, for his or their Expense; and that they do instruct the said Delegate or Delegates to hold themselves ready to depart at One Hour's Warning."

These Resolutions appear, from the Minutes, to have been immediately followed up by the Appointment of a Secret Committee, whose Powers and Mode of Proceeding are precisely and distinctly marked out in the Minutes of the Convention. It is proper farther to state, that on the 4th of December, the Day preceding the Arrest of the Ringleaders, when they probably had either received Information, or had suspected from their own Conduct that Measures were to be taken against them, the Convention, on the Motion of Margaret, unanimously resolved,

" That the Moment of any illegal Dispersion of the British Convention shall be considered as a Summons to the Delegates to repair to the Place of Meeting appointed for the Convention of Emergency by the Secret Committee; and that the Secret Committee be instructed, without Delay, to proceed to fix the Place of Meeting."

Upon the Evening of the 5th of December, the Convention met, notwithstanding the Arrest of their leading Members on the Morning of that Day, and proceeded instantly to declare themselves permanent, and to meet in Spite of the Magistrates; but were prevented from proceeding further by the unexpected Appearance of the Magistrates, to whose Authority they refused to submit, until the Provost of the City seized the Sheffield Delegate, their President, and compelled him to leave the Chair. They again met on the Evening of the 6th of December, in a House in the Suburbs of the City, and were proceeding with the same Violence as on the preceding Evening, when the Sheriff of the County interrupted and dispersed them. Since this Period no public Meeting has been held; but they have continued to meet privately and in different Societies, and appear still to carry on a Secret Correspondence with various Parts of England and Scotland. An Abstract of the Minutes of this Convention, and of the most material Motions and Proceedings held amongst these Persons, and Three Letters to the Secretary of the Corresponding Society, are subjoined in the Appendix to this Report.

SUBSEQUENT to the Dispersal of the Scotch Convention, the Plan for calling another Convention in England became the immediate Object of the Two Societies in London. An Account of their Proceedings for this Purpose has already been laid before the House in the former Report; but in order to give a more connected View of the whole Subject, your Committee have inserted, in Order of Time, in the Appendix, the same Proceedings to which they have already referred. Your Committee having observed, that the Variation between the Entry on the Books of the Society for Constitutional Information, of the 1st of April 1794, and the Entry of the Report received the same Day, from the Joint Committee of the Two Societies, is likely to be relied on, as tending to shew that the Society for Constitutional Information did not concur with their Committee in the Design of assembling a pretended General Convention of the People, have inserted at full Length in the Appendix all that appears in the Books of the Constitutional Society on that Subject. They have also thought it right to insert the Account given of this Transaction, in the Examination of Mr. Thompson, a Member of this House, to which they refer.

In pursuance of the Plan which they have adopted, the Committee have next inserted such Correspondence and Proceedings of the Societies in the Country, as have passed since the Dispersal of the Convention at Edinburgh, with relation to the Measures to be taken in Consequence of that Event, and to their Concurrence in the Design, formed in London, for assembling another Convention in England.

At a General Meeting of Delegates, held at Norwich, it was unanimously resolved, that One or more Delegates shall be sent to the next General Convention, as soon as called for by their London Correspondence.

In a Letter to the Secretary of the London Corresponding Society, from the Norwich Societies, they desire to know whether the Friends of the People consent to a Convention, and whether they will take an active Part.—“ Many “ of our Friends are fully convinced of the *Necessity, Legality, and Rationality* “ *of a Convention; but Query whether the Time be expedient?*”

Some Persons, who describe themselves as Friends to a radical Reform, write from Newcastle upon Tyne, to the Secretary of the Corresponding Society, that they dare assert the natural and unalienable Rights of Man, and have formed themselves into Societies, which meet Weekly, admitting none but *known-Friends*, and have assumed no Name but that of Newspaper Companies.—They were in great Spirits while the British Convention continued to sit; but after their Suppression, a Damp was cast on the Whole.—Subscriptions were ready to be sent off the very Night they were suppressed.—They wish to copy the Example of the London Corresponding Society, and to know their Views, and Intensions as soon as convenient; and desiring to be favoured with the Correspondence of that Society—they conclude, by expressing a Hope “ that the Hydra of Tyranny and Oppression may soon fall under the “ Guillotine

Appendix C.
8 Dec. 1793. 18, 14.
Jan. 21. 28 Mar.
4. 11 April, and 9
May 1794.

Examination of Mr.
Thompson, Appen-
dix G.

Appendix H.
Norwich, 24. Feb.
1794.

Appendix I.
23 April 1794.

Appendix H.
Newcastle upon
Tyne, 18 May 1794.

" *G. Principles of Truth and Reason.*" The Corresponding Society return an Answer, in which they inform the Society at Newcastle to be assured that the glorious Reign of *Liberty and Equality* will, ere long, be established, and modern Governments, with *Usage: Appendix of Wickedness and Corruption*, will flee from their general Influence.—They complain of the royal *Advocates* of Despotism in Great Britain, and express their Readiness cordially to unite with every Society in the Three Kingdoms, who have for their Object a full and effectual Representation of the People; they therefore have deputed Six of their Members to meet Six Members of the Society for Constitutional Information, to form a Committee of Correspondence and Co-operation.—" This Committee meets regularly twice a Week, and any Member delegated by your Society will meet with every Information required. We inclose you a few of our Resolutions, entered into at our General Meeting on the 14th of April, which will be sufficiently explanatory of our Sentiments and Views. We heartily concur with you in wishing that the Yoke of Tyranny and Imposition may soon fall under the Guiding of Truth and Reason."

Appendix H.
Halifax, 21 May
1794.

A Letter to the Secretary of the London Corresponding Society, from the Secretary of the Constitutional Society at Sheffield, gives an Account of a Meeting at Halifax. The Friends of Peace and Reform at Halifax held a General public Meeting in the open Air, on April 21st, 1794, at which were many Friends from Leeds, Wakefield, Huddersfield, Bradford, and the adjacent Neighbourhood.—The Friends of Freedom, after the Meeting, agreed to hold a General Meeting of Delegates, in order to consider of the *Measures to be adopted by them preparatory to a General Convention*.—The People of Halifax were advised by the Society at Sheffield, to defer the Meeting of Delegates until further Information from the London Corresponding Society on that Subject; and for that Reason Application was made to the Secretary of the London Corresponding Society, requesting as early Intelligence as possible on that important Business.

Appendix H.
To Bristol, 24 April
1794.

The Society at Bristol applied the Resolution of the London Corresponding Society for forming another General Convention, and state that their increasing Numbers give them every reasonable Hope of soon being able more effectually to co-operate with that Society—they desire a Sketch of the Plan respecting the General Convention. In the Answer of the London Corresponding Society it is found, that a printed Circular Letter from them has been determined upon, of which the Society at Bristol may expect a Copy in a few Days.—This refers to the circular Letter for calling a Convention, inserted by your Committee in their former Report.

Your Committee have thought it right in this Place to call the Attention of the House to the Proceedings of a Meeting held at Sheffield on the 7th of April 1794, which form a very material Part of these Transactions; although it does not appear that at that Meeting any Resolution was passed expressing an Intention to send Delegates to the intended Convention.

These

These Proceedings consist of an Address to the King; an Address to the Nation; certain Resolutions; and Speeches (printed together with them, and) delivered on the same Day by a Person calling himself Henry Yorke.—The Title is as follows:

- " Proceedings of the Public Meeting held at Sheffield, in the open Air,
 " on the 7th of April 1794; and also, an Address to the British Na-
 " tion, being An Exposition of the Motives which have determined
 " the People of Sheffield to petition the House of Commons as well as
 " the Subject of Parliamentary Reform."

In the Course of these Proceedings it was moved, " That a Petition be
 " presented to the House of Commons, for a Reform in the Representation of
 " the People in Parliament:" But so marked was the Disapprobation given by
 the whole Meeting to this Measure, that not one single Person *seconded* the
 Motion, but a most profound Silence, interrupted only by a few Murmurs, was
 observed.

An Account is afterwards given of One of Yorke's Speeches, in which, after
 speaking of General History, there is the following Passage:

" It must be granted that this Experience is important, because it teaches
 " the suffering Nations of the present Day in what Manner to prepare their
 " *doublefold Ingredients*, and Humanists in what Manner to *rhinicle* them, so as to
 " produce with Effect that *grand political Expulsion*, which as the same Time
 " that it buries Despotism, already convulsive and agonizing, in Ruins,
 " may raise up the People to the Dignity and sublime Grandeur of Free-
 " dom."

" When such a Revolution of Sentiments shall have dispersed the Mists of
 " Prejudice; when, by the *millions* of handbills from the Press, the meanness
 " Contager of our Country shall be *extirpated*, and the Sun of Reason shall
 " shine in its full Meridian over us, then the remaining Fate of the whole
 " People shall resemble the Five hundred and Fifty eight Gentlemen in St. Bar-
 " tholomew's Church to go about their Business."

The Resolutions adopted at the Meeting were;

- " 1st. That the People being the true and only Source of Government, the
 " Freedom of speaking and writing upon any Subject, cannot be denied to the
 " Members of a free Government, without offering the gravest Injuria to the
 " Majesty of the People.
 " 2d. That therefore the Condemnation of Citizens Muir, Palmer, Skirring,
 " Margant, and Gerald to Transportation, for exposing the Corruptions of the
 " British Government, was an Act better suited to the blessings of a despotic
 " than a free Government.
 " 3d. That the Address which has now been read, be presented to the King,
 " in Behalf of the above persecuted Patriots.

" 4th. That

" 4th. That in every Country where the People have no Share in their Government, *There is a Tyranny.*

" 5th. That therefore a Government is tyrannical or free, in Proportion as the People are equally or unequally represented.

" 6th. Convinced of this Truth, it is the Opinion of this Meeting that the People ought to demand as a *Right*, and not petition as a *Favour*, for Universal Representation.

" 7th. That therefore we will petition the House of Commons no more, on this Subject."

And lastly (after agreeing to a Petition to the King respecting Negro Slavery, and passing several Resolutions on that Subject) " That the Committee of the Sheffield Constitutional Society be desired to see that the above Resolutions be *carried into Effect*; and that they prepare an *Address* to the British Nation, explanatory of the Motives which have induced this Meeting to adopt the Resolution of no more petitioning the House of Commons on the Subject of Reform."

The following Passages are extracted from this Address.

" Friends and Countrymen,

" We have this Day decided, with the Exception of only One dissentient Voice, that the House of Commons shall never again be petitioned by us on the Subject of Parliamentary Reform."

The Address then recites the Words of the Petition of the 12th of April 1793, [" That the House of Commons is not in the just Sense of the Words *what your Petitioners are from Force obliged to term it, viz. the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled;*"] and then proceeds, in different Passages, as follows:

" Our Petition was received with the utmost Indignation by the House of Commons, which was no more than we expected.—

" And although our Petition was disdainfully rejected because not couched in Language sufficiently polite and respectful for the *Five Hundred and Fifty-eight Gentlemen* who sit at the House of Commons; yet, believe us, Fellow Citizens, we are still of Opinion, that the Matter it contained was not only just and proper, but we think that even the Language which gave so much Offence to the *honourable Gentlemen* was *much too polite and too moderate* for us. For if the House of Commons were the real Representatives of the People, we certainly had a *Right to dispute, and not to petition*, because they could be considered in no other Light than as the Organs of the Public Will; and if they refused to obey that Will, they would be Usurpers and not Representatives.—

" However the Petition, such as it was, being termed *disrespectful*, was thrown out by a Majority of 79, there being 29 only who voted for its being received, and 108 who voted against it.—

" Such

" Such imperious Treatment rather gives *Warning* than strikes *Terror*.—

" We Laid to the House of Commons, We are wronged and aggrieved: *Will*
 " you right us, and redress our Grievances, or will you not? If you will, we shall
 " be satisfied; if you will not, we shall seek Redress some other Way. This is
 " the sole Righten with us; and we put it, as we thought, in a most becoming Style
 " to the House of Commons. But our Petition being frowned, we shall trouble
 " them no more with our coarse and unwomanly Language." " It will be our
 " Duty to proceed, as we have uniformly done hitherto, in enlightening the
 " Public Mind; and when a complete Revolution of Sentiment shall take place (as
 " will shortly be the Case) in our Country, we shall open our Mouths in that
 " Key we think most agreeable to ourselves." " And our Voice, together with that
 " of our disfranchised Countrymen, will resemble, perhaps, the Thunderings from
 " Mount Sinai!"—

" Those who have a Right to speak in a dissatistial Tone, disgrace themselves by
 " petitioning."—

" These essential Principles are both easy and comprehensive. On these
 " we build our Right to Representation, and revere the Idea of future Peti-
 " tions. By these Maxims, we find that every Englishman is free; and that in
 " the Election of a Supreme Magistrate, or in the Delegation of Legislative
 " Powers, he concedes his Actions to a certain Superintendence, for the express
 " Purpose of preventing Liberty from rushing over its Limits, and intro-
 " ducing a System of universal Violence, Injury, or Licenseness. And al-
 " though either of these Two delegated Powers be sufficient to keep any In-
 " dividual to his Duty, or to controul every Association in the Community,
 " yet they are always inferior to the Force which the whole Society might exert,
 " and are amenable to that Society, either in an Assembly of the Nation, or in a
 " Deputation formed for the Purpose.—

" Acts of Parliament, unless sanctioned by the approving Voice of the whole
 " Community, or their Representatives, are nothing less than arbitrary Edicts
 " under different Names, and bear a strong Resemblance to the Rescripts of
 " the Emperor, or the Decretals of the Vatican.—

" What is the Constitution to us, if we are nothing to it? And what is any
 " Government but Tyranny, in which the People have no Share? The Con-
 " stitution of Britain, indeed, is highly exalted, as the greatest Effort of Human
 " Wisdom; so is the Constitution of Turkey at Constantinople: But there are
 " Prejudices; and the long Tyranny of Prejudice is verging in a speedy Ter-
 " mination.—

" Yes, Countrymen, we demand Equality of Rights, in which is included
 " Equality of Representation; without which Terror is Law, and the Obligations of Justice are weakened, because unfounded by the sacred Voice of
 " the People. We are not speaking of that visionary Equality of Property,
 " the practical Assertion of which would desolate the World, and re-plunge it
 " into the darkest and wildest Barbarism; but that Equality we claim is to
 " make

31/ " make the Slave a Man, the Man a Citizen, and the Citizen an integral Part
 " of the State; *to make him a just Sovereign, and not a Subject.*"

The Reasons which induced the Meeting at Sheffield to omit any Resolutions upon the Subject of the intended Convention, have been distinctly stated, by Two Persons who had been Secretaries to the Constitutional Society in that Town.

From their Examination it appears that a Number of printed Circular Letters had been received at Sheffield from the Secretary to the London Corresponding Society, relative to a Convention, and that the Sheffield Society objected to the calling it at this Time, but had no Objection to the Measure itself; that it was their Opinion that the British Convention at Edinburgh ought to have secured the Confidence of the People by a public Address to the Nation, before they had required to sit as a permanent Body; and that the Address from Sheffield to the Nation, containing a Recommendation that no more Petitions should be presented to Parliament, was intended to prepare the People for a Convention.

While these Proceedings were taking place in different Parts of England, with a View to a General Convention, it appears from the Information contained in the Letters from the Secretary of State, which have been already referred to, that Measures of a similar Tendency were carrying on with great Activity, and to a great Extent, in Scotland. The Appointment of Delegates to attend a Convention to be assembled at some Place in England at an early Period, seems to have been very generally recommended by the Committee at Edinburgh.

The naming the Place was for the present omitted, but it was promised to be shortly announced through the Secret Committee, in the same Manner as appears from the Circular Letter of the London Corresponding Society (inserted in the former Report) to have been intended in this Part of the Kingdom; and the Invitation to appoint Delegates appears to have been circulated by the same emissaries who were employed by the Committee at Edinburgh for the Purpose of promoting the Plan of arming those with whom they were in Correspondence.

FROM a Review of these Proceedings, it indubitably appears that the immediate and ostensible Object professed to be aimed at by the Measures which have been related (if stated within the narrowest Limits) was that of effecting no less fundamental a Change in the Frame of the House of Commons, than the Introduction of Universal Suffrage in the Election of it, and rendering the Period of the Election Annual: That through the whole Course of the Correspondence which has been carried on, and the Concert which has been formed by different Societies for this Purpose, no Idea has for a long Time been pointed at, of obtaining this Change by *any Application to Parliament*; that on the contrary any such Idea has been specifically and pointedly disclaimed, recently by the formal and in some Instances public Resolutions of the Societies in London, and many of those in the Country, and repeatedly, and from an early

early Period, in the private Correspondence, either of the Societies or of their leading Members. It has been expressly laid down, that more effectual Means than Petitions must be tried. The express Object stated in the Resolutions for calling the proposed General Convention of the People, or General Meeting of the Friends of Liberty (under which ever of those Names it is to be described) was to consider of the Means of obtaining a full and equal Representation, not of the Thing to be obtained, but of the *Means of obtaining* it; and this subsequent to the Declarations last mentioned, that more effectual Means than Petitions must be tried. These more effectual *Means* could, in the very Nature of the Thing, consist of but One of Two possible Alternatives, either introducing this Change in 'the Frame of One Branch of the Legislature, by some other Authority than that of the Legislature itself, or bringing that Legislature, either by Force or Intimidation, against its Will, to lead its Authority to that Purpose.

Accordingly the mildest Terms in which, for a long Time, the Parties to this Measure have described the Mode by which they expected to attain their Ends, have pointed at so extending and diffusing these Societies, and establishing such an Union and Concert among them, as might spread their Principles and Opinions through every Part of the Country, and produce a Declaration of the collective Sense of the People, in such a Manner, as to overcome all Resistance.

But on many other Occasions, and more openly of late, the Language adopted has pointed more distinctly at the Use of open Force; at the specific Object of actually assembling a pretended National Convention; at the Necessity of preparing *consequently* for the STRUGGLE, which they must expect, before those who were adverse to their Measure would yield to them; and at obtaining the Redress which they profess to seek, not from Parliament, or from the Executive Government, but FROM THEMSELVES, and from THEIR OWN STRENGTH AND VALOUR, from their own Laws, and not from the Laws of those whom they term their Rulers, Masters, and Oppressors: And when the Language to this Effect repeatedly and deliberately used on so many Occasions, and in so many Quarters, is combined with the Means lately employed for providing an armed Force, and with the other Projects of Violence and open Attack on different Branches of the existing Authority, which have appeared to be in the Contemplation of some of the Parties in these Measures, it is impossible not to conclude, that it was by such Means, by their own Strength and Numbers, by open Force, defying and either over-awing or superseding the Authority of the Legislature, that (in the Extravagance of their Imagination) they had formed the Hope of accomplishing their daring and desperate Designs.

Not, extravagant and enormous as this Project is, even on this Statement, it appears to your Committee to be by no Means confined even within these Limits. The Attempt to obtain a Change in One Branch of the Legislature by Force or Terror, against the Will of the Whole, does indeed of itself include, if successful, at least a temporary Suspension of all the existing Powers of Government,

verment, and could hardly be supposed to stop short of an entire Destruction of the Constitution. But from the whole Tenor of the System which has been acted upon, it is apparent that this was not merely the possible or probable Consequence of such an Attempt, but that the Principles on which it was founded, and the Mode by which it was intended to be executed, obviously and necessarily tended to such a Result. The Principles on which the supposed Right of Universal Suffrage was founded, were not such as led merely to the single Act of altering to that Extent, the Frame of the House of Commons, and afterwards leaving the House of Commons, thus modelled, in Possession, together with the Crown and the House of Lords, of their former Legislative Authority, or the Crown in Possession of its former Executive Power; but, while they led to an Alteration in the Frame of the House of Commons, they equally led, if carried to their natural Extent, to the Extinction and Destruction of the other Two Branches of the Legislature.

A Proposition so extravagant may at first be difficult to be credited; but it appears to the Committee to be distinctly proved, from an Examination of the Nature of the Principles themselves; from a Consideration of the System as actually carried into Effect in France, and proposed as a Model by those who were the chief Actors in these Proceedings in this Country; and, by repeated Declarations or Acts, which either directly or by necessary Inference point at the Destruction of Hereditary Monarchy, Hereditary Nobility, and every Distinction of Orders and Ranks in Society.

YOUR COMMITTEE have stated to the House in their former Report, that subsequent to the Seizure taken for the Apprehension of the Persons suspected of being concerned in the Design which has been the Subject of this Report, strong Indications had appeared of a Disposition to concert the Means of resisting such Measures as might be adopted for preventing the Accomplishment of the Design itself, or for bringing the Authors or Abettors of it to Punishment.

It appears to your Committee, that immediately after the Apprehension of several of the leading Members of the London Corresponding Society, a Committee was appointed, under the Title of a Committee in Emergency, for the express Purpose of counteracting the Seizure which had been taken by the Executive Government to check the further Progress of the System which has been detailed in this Report. It also appears that it has been made Matter of Deliberation, in the Divisions of the London Corresponding Society, whether in the present Emergency they should proceed to address the King, to petition Parliament, or to make an Appeal to the Nation at large: The latter Proposition was adopted; and, in Consequence of that Decision, a Paper has been printed and published under the Name of the London Corresponding Society, and which your Committee has every Reason to believe to be authentic: This Paper contains the following Passages, viz. "That we intended to call a Convention is a Truth, " which needed neither General Warrants, armed Messengers, or Secret Com- " mittees to discover, since it was accompanied by a Resolution, to make that " Intention known, by 200,000 printed Copies of that Day's Proceedings. But the

" the Purport ascribed to that Convention, viz. the assuming *Legislative Power* : a
 " groundless Falshood :—The sole Intent was to devise Means of attaining a
 " complete Representative Body, on the Principles of Universal Suffrage, equal
 " Personal Representation, and Annual Election ; and *whenever, or however,*
 " such a Body can be obtained, it will not be in the Power of all the Placemen
 " and Pensioners in *St. Stephen's Chapel* to dispute its *Legislative Authority*. We
 " are aware that in these Times of *Constitutional Bigotry*, the last Sentence may
 " sound unpleasantly to many, who do not deserve to be considered as Enemies
 " to Liberty :—We therefore wish it to be clearly understood, that we speak of a
 " Representative Body of the whole Nation, and not of any particular Part or
 " Description of Men ;—And as the Divine Right of Kings is not at this Time
 " directly asserted (at least in this-Country) by any, but the most extremely ig-
 " norant, we think it ought to follow, as a natural Consequence, that the People
 " are the only legitimate Source of Authority ; and it appears to us that the vain
 " Attempt to draw a Medium between these Opinions has produced endless
 " Absurdities and Contradictions, to the Disgrace of our Records and Law
 " Books. Among these the most conspicuous is called, *The Abolition of James*
 " *the Second*, which Phrase (coined for the Purpose) may be either understood
 " to mean his Expulsion by Popular Authority, or his voluntary Relinquition ; if the
 " former, it justifies the Doctrine which we have advanced, if the latter, we scruple
 " not to call it a National Lie. To the Honour of Scotland, their Parliament ex-
 " plicitly declared him banished by Authority of the People. But, Citizens, let us
 " explain the Truth :—The Expulsion of James the Second, and the Establishment
 " of William the Third, though doubtless agreeable to the general Wishes of the
 " People, was not in Point of Form an Act of the People. It was the Act of a
 " Number of Persons, calling themselves a Convention, but not regularly au-
 " thorized by Popular Delegation, and consequently falling under the Description
 " of a Faction ; and this not merely in Theory but in Fact, for their Unwillingness
 " to acknowledge the rightful Power of the People was the Reason of their
 " adopting the inexplicable Phrase above-mentioned.

" The providing Arms is another Charge, on which we wish to speak with
 " Caution ; left in asserting, which we do—that it is totally false—we should be
 " understood to admit that if it had been true, it would have proved Crimi-
 " nality.

" We freely acknowledge, that some of our Members have applied themselves
 " to the Knowledge of Arms ; and, far from desiring to make a Secret of this Cir-
 " cumstance, we wish their Example was followed by the whole Nation. We
 " then need not fear Invasion, either from Frenchmen, Hessians, or Hano-
 " verians : Nor should we easily be alarmed by the mock Discovery of Plots,
 " which never existed.

" We are perfectly convinced of the Propriety of our Opinions respecting the
 " Rights of the People to have Arms, and to regulate their Constitution.

" It may be expected that we should not conclude without exhorting the af-
 " fected Friends of Freedom to an active Performance in the Obedience of their
 " Obligations ;—but, judging from the Conduct of our own Members, we are
 " happy in declaring that we think no such Exhortation necessary."

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From

From these Passages it appears, that since the Apprehension of their leading Members, and the Measures which have been lately taken in Parliament on the Subject of their Designs, the London Corresponding Society have openly avowed their Intention to call a Convention, for the Purpose of devising Means to attain a complete Representative Body, on the Principles of Annual Election and of Universal Suffrage, without any Reference whatever to Parliament, and (as far as can be collected from their own Interpretation of the Phrases which they have used to describe the House of Commons) with the further Intention of arrogating to the Body constituted according to the Manner to be prescribed by such a Convention, the whole Legislative Authority of the Nation.

It appears also that the London Corresponding Society admit that some of their Members have applied themselves to the Knowledge of Arms; and although they deny having provided Arms, they desire not to be understood as admitting that if it had been true it would have proved Criminality; and they assert the Propriety of their Opinion respecting the Rights of the People to have Arms, and to regulate their Constitution.

And this open Avowal of the Design of calling a Convention, and of the Fact of having applied themselves to the Use of Arms, is accompanied with a Declaration of their determined Purpose to persevere, with Activity, in the Objects of their Association:—Objects which have been already sufficiently explained to the House by Reference to the Acts of the Society, and to the professed Principles of its leading Members.

IF the Circumstances which have been stated in this Report appear to the House in the same View in which, on the most attentive Consideration, they have appeared to your Committee, it is scarcely necessary to state any collateral Matter in order to satisfy the House how much the Peace, Safety, and Happiness of the Country must have been affected by the further Progress of the Measures which have been stated.

But if any Thing were wanting to add to this Impression; it would arise from the Recollection, that the Incitement to Internal Commotions in other Countries is the most distinguishing Feature, both of the declared Principles and of the uniform Practice of France under their present System, and that in the Public Acts of those exercising the Powers of Government in that Country, an Intention of invading these Kingdoms, founded on the Idea of receiving Support and Assistance within the Country, has been openly avowed. The Case does not, however, rest here.—It has come under the Observation of your Committee, that recent Measures have been actually taken by the ruling Powers in France for endeavouring to ascertain, both in Great Britain and Ireland, the Degree of Co-operation and Assistance which they might expect in any Attempt of this Nature.

This Communication does not appear, from any Evidence before the Committee, to have any immediate Connection with the Societies, whose Proceedings have been the Subject of this Report, but the Connection with their general

general Objects is sufficiently evident, both from the Nature of the Thing, and from the Particulars which have been stated in the Course of the Report.

It is not immaterial to add, that in Ireland these Communications appear to have been directly addressed to a Person acting in Concert with the Societies here, One of their Honorary Members, and who has taken an active Part in the Course of the Proceedings to which your Committee have referred.

YOUR COMMITTEE have, for obvious Reasons, omitted to annex to their Report the Evidence of particular Witnesses, by whom the Facts above stated are supported; and, for the same Reasons, they have studiously forbore to mention the Names of Persons and Places, in all Cases in which they could be omitted with a proper Attention to the general Object of their Enquiry, and to the Information which the House has a Right to expect upon so important a Subject.

SECOND REPORT

FROM

The COMMITTEE of SECRECY.

Ordered to be printed 6th June 1794.
